



DRUID STONES, AVEBURY

THE SOUL OF A BISHOP .
THE
SECRET PLACES OF THE HEART

BY
H. G. WELLS



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PREFACE TO VOLUME XXV

THE two stories in this volume are both designed on a more limited scale than the writer's chief novels, they are single houses beside the palatial dimensions of "Tono-Bungay" or "Joan and Peter" Both, like "The Undying Fire," are dialogue novels in which the chief incidents are encounters between ideas "The Soul of a Bishop" tells of the disconcerting experience of an Anglican bishop who is stricken suddenly by a living belief in God, it is a dialogue between the bishop and his God, with Lady Sunderbund and others intervening "The Secret Places of the Heart" was written in 1920-1 It is the writer's third experiment with the dialogue novel It discusses the store of initiative in a man and how it may be wasted and replenished It had a mixed reception, a number of reviewers hussed the characters in a manner that has now become traditional with the author's novels, and it was generally felt that Sir Richmond was not nearly such a dear as Kipps The author clings to the persuasion that it is quite a good piece of work

“Man’s true Environment is God.”

J. H. OLDHAM in “The Christian Gospel.”

(Tract of the N. M. R. and H.)

THE SOUL OF A BISHOP

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE DREAM

§ 1



It was a scene of bitter disputation. A hawk-nosed young man with a pointing finger was prominent. His face worked violently, his lips moved very rapidly, but what he said was inaudible.

Behind him the little rufous man with the big eyes twitched at his robe and offered suggestions.

And behind these two clustered a great multitude of heated, excited, swarthy faces. . . .

The emperor sat on his golden throne in the midst of the gathering, commanding silence by gestures, speaking inaudibly to them in a tongue the majority did not use, and then prevailing. They ceased their interruptions and the old man, Arius, took up the debate. For a time all those impassioned faces were intent upon him, they listened as though they sought occasion, and suddenly as if by a preconcerted arrangement they were all thrusting their fingers into their ears and knitting their brows in assumed horror; some were crying aloud and making as if to fly. Some indeed tucked up their garments and fled. They spread out into a pattern. They were like the little monks who run from St. Jerome's lion in the picture

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by Carpaccio. Then one zealot rushed forward and smote the old man heavily upon the mouth. . . .

The hall seemed to grow vaster and vaster, the disputing infuriated figures multiplied to an innumerable assembly, they drove about like snowflakes in a gale, they whirled in argumentative couples, they spun in eddies of contradiction, they made extraordinary groupings; and then amidst the cloudy darkness of the unfathomable dome above them there appeared and increased a radiant triangle in which shone an eye. The eye and the triangle filled the heavens, sent out flickering rays, glowed to a blinding incandescence, seemed to be speaking words of thunder that were nevertheless inaudible. It was as if that thunder filled the heavens, it was as if it were nothing but the beating artery in the sleeper's ear. The attention strained to hear and comprehend, and on the very verge of comprehension snapped like a fiddle-string. . . .

"Nicæa!"

The word remained like a little ash after a flare.

The sleeper had awakened and lay very still, oppressed by a sense of intellectual effort that had survived the dream in which it had arisen. Was it so that things had happened? The slumber-shadowed mind, moving obscurely, could not determine whether it was so or not. Had they indeed behaved in this manner when the great mystery was established? Who said they stopped their ears with their fingers and fled, shouting with horror? Shouting? Was it Eusebius or Athanasius? Or Sozomen. . . . Some letter or apology by Athanasius? . . . And surely

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it was impossible that the Trinity could have appeared visibly as a triangle and an eye. Above such an assembly. . . .

That was mere dreaming, of course. Was it dreaming after Raphael? After Raphael? The drowsy mind wandered into a side issue. Was the picture that had suggested this dream the one in the Vatican where all the Fathers of the Church are shown disputing together? But there surely God and the Son themselves were painted with a symbol—some symbol—also? But was that disputation about the Trinity at all? Wasn't it rather about a chalice and a dove? Of course it was a chalice and a dove! Then where did one see the triangle and the eye? And men disputing? Some such picture there was. . . .

What a lot of disputing there had been! What endless disputing! Which had gone on. Until last night. When this very disagreeable young man with the hawk nose and the pointing finger had tackled one when one was sorely fagged, and disputed, disputed. Rebuked and disputed. "Answer me this," he had said. . . . And still one's poor brains disputed and would not rest. . . . About the Trinity. . . .

The brain upon the pillow was now wearily awake. It was at once hopelessly awake and active and hopelessly unprogressive. It was like some floating stick that had got caught in an eddy in a river, going round and round and round. And round. Eternally—eternally—eternally begotten.

"But what possible meaning do you attach then to such a phrase as eternally begotten?"

The brain upon the pillow stared hopelessly at

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this question, without an answer, without an escape. The three repetitions spun round and round, became a swiftly revolving triangle, like some electric sign that had got beyond control, in the midst of which stared an unwinking and resentful eye. . . .

§ 2

Every one knows that expedient of the sleepless, the counting of sheep.

You lie quite still, you breathe regularly, you imagine sheep jumping over a gate, one after another, you count them quietly and slowly until you count yourself off through a fading string of phantom numbers to number Nod. . . .

But sheep, alas! suggest an episcopal crook.

And presently a black sheep had got into the succession and was struggling violently with the crook about its leg, a hawk-nosed black sheep full of reproof, with disordered hair and a pointing finger. A young man with a most disagreeable voice.

At which the other sheep took heart and, deserting the numbered succession, came and sat about the fire in a big drawing-room and argued also. In particular there was Lady Sunderbund, a pretty fragile tall woman in the corner, richly jewelled, who sat with her pretty eyes watching and her lips compressed. What had she thought of it? She had said very little.

It is an unusual thing for a mixed gathering of this sort to argue about the Trinity. Simply because a

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tired bishop had fallen into their party. It was not fair to him to pretend that the atmosphere was a liberal and inquiring one, when the young man who had sat still and dormant by the table was in reality a keen and bitter Irish Roman Catholic. Then the question, a question-begging question, was put quite suddenly, without preparation or prelude, by surprise. "Why, Bishop, was the *Spermaticos Logos* identified with the Second and not the Third Person of the Trinity?"

It was indiscreet, it was silly, to turn upon the speaker and affect an air of disengagement and modernity, and to say: "Ah, that indeed *is* the unfortunate aspect of the whole affair."

Whereupon the fierce young man had exploded with: "To that, is it, that you Anglicans have come?"

The whole gathering had given itself up to the disputation, Lady Sunderbund, an actress, a dancer—though she, it is true, did not say very much—a novelist, a mechanical expert of some sort, a railway peer, geniuses, hairy and Keltic, people of no clearly definable position but all quite unequal to the task of maintaining that air of reverent vagueness, that tenderness of touch which is by all Anglican standards imperative in so deep, so mysterious, and nowadays, in mixed society at least, so infrequent a discussion.

It was like animals breaking down a fence about some sacred spot. Within a couple of minutes the affair had become highly improper. They had raised their voices, they had spoken with the utmost familiarity of almost unspeakable things. There had been

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bed, partly covering black hosen and silver-buckled shoes.

For a moment the tired gaze of the man in the bed rested upon these evidences of his episcopal dignity. Then he turned from them to the watch at the bedside. . . .

He groaned helplessly.

§ 4

These country doctors were no good. There wasn't a physician in the diocese. He must go to London.

He looked into the weary eyes of his reflection and said, as one makes a reassuring promise, "London."

He was being worried. He was being intolerably worried, and he was ill and unable to sustain his positions. This doubt, this sudden discovery of controversial unsoundness, was only one aspect of his general neurasthenia. It had been creeping into his mind since the "Light Under the Altar" controversy. Now suddenly it had leaped upon him from his own unwary lips.

The immediate trouble arose from his loyalty. He had followed the king's example; he had become a total abstainer and, in addition, on his own account he had ceased to smoke. And his digestion, which Princhester had first made sensitive, was deranged. He was suffering chemically, suffering one of those nameless sequences of maladjustments that still defy our ordinary medical science. It was afflicting him with a general *malaise*, it was affecting his energy, his temper, all the balance and comfort of his nerves.

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All day he was weary; all night he was wakeful. He was estranged from his body. He was distressed by a sense of detachment from the things about him, by a curious intimation of unreality in everything he experienced. And with that went this levity of conscience, a heaviness of soul and a levity of conscience, that could make him talk as though the Creeds did not matter—as though nothing mattered. . . .

If only he could smoke!

He was persuaded that a couple of Egyptian cigarettes, or three at the outside, a day, would do wonders in restoring his nervous calm. That, and just a weak whisky-and-soda at lunch and dinner. Suppose *now*——!

His conscience, his sense of honour, deserted him. Latterly he had had several of these conscience-blanks; it was only when they were over that he realised that they had occurred.

One might smoke up the chimney, he reflected. But he had no cigarettes! Perhaps if he were to slip down-stairs. . . .

Why had he given up smoking?

He groaned aloud. He and his reflection eyed one another in mutual despair.

There came before his memory the image of a boy's face, a swarthy little boy, grinning, grinning with a horrible knowingness and pointing his finger—an accusing finger. It had been the most exasperating, humiliating, and shameful incident in the bishop's career. It was the afternoon for his fortnightly address to the Shop-girls' Church Association, and he had been seized with a panic fear, entirely irrational

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and unjustifiable, that he would not be able to deliver the address. The fear had arisen after lunch, had gripped his mind, and then as now had come the thought, "If only I could smoke!" And he had smoked. It seemed better to break a vow than fail the Association. He had fallen to the temptation with a completeness that now filled him with shame and horror. He had stalked Dunk, his valet-butler, out of the dining-room, had affected to need a book from the bookcase beyond the sideboard, had gone insincerely to the sideboard humming "From Greenland's icy mountains," and then, glancing over his shoulder, had *stolen* one of his own cigarettes, one of the fatter sort. With this and his bedroom matches, he had gone off to the bottom of the garden among the laurels, looked everywhere except above the wall to be sure that he was alone, and at last lit up, only as he raised his eyes in gratitude for the first blissful inhalation to discover that dreadful little boy peeping at him from the crotch in the yew-tree in the next garden. As though God had sent him to be a witness!

Their eyes had met. The bishop recalled with an agonised distinctness every moment, every error, of that shameful encounter. He had been too surprised to conceal the state of affairs from the pitiless scrutiny of those youthful eyes. He had instantly made as if to put the cigarette behind his back, and then as frankly dropped it. . . .

His soul would not be more naked at the resurrection.

The little boy had stared, realised the state of affairs slowly but surely, pointed his finger. . . .

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Never had two human beings understood each other more completely.

A dirty little boy! Capable no doubt of a thousand kindred scoundrelisms.

It seemed ages before the conscience-stricken bishop could tear himself from the spot and walk back, with such a pretence of dignity as he could muster, to the house.

And instead of the discourse he had prepared for the Shop-girls' Church Association, he had preached on temptation and falling, and how he knew they had all fallen, and how he understood and could sympathise with the bitterness of a secret shame, a moving but unsuitable discourse that had already been subjected to misconstruction and severe reproof in the local press of Princhester.

But the haunting thing in the bishop's memory was the face and gesture of the little boy. That grubby finger stabbed him to the heart.

"Oh, God!" he groaned. "The *meanness* of it! How did I bring myself——?"

He turned out the light convulsively, and rolled over in the bed, making a sort of cocoon of himself. He bored his head into the pillow and groaned, and then struggled impatiently to throw off the bed-clothes. Then he sat up and talked aloud.

"I must go to Brighton-Pomfrey," he said. "And get a medical dispensation. If I do not smoke——"

He paused for a long time.

Then his voice sounded again in the darkness, speaking quietly, speaking with a note almost of satisfaction.

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"I shall go mad. I must smoke or I shall go mad."

For a long time he sat up in the great bed with his arms about his knees.

§ 5

Fearful things came to him; things at once dreadfully blasphemous and entirely weak-minded.

The triangle and the eye became almost visible upon the black background of night. They were very angry. They were spinning round and round faster and faster. Because he was a bishop and because really he did not believe fully and completely in the Trinity. At one and the same time he did not believe in the Trinity and was terrified by the anger of the Trinity at his unbelief. . . . He was afraid. He was aghast. . . . And oh! he was weary. . . .

He rubbed his eyes.

"If I could have a cup of tea!" he said.

Then he perceived with surprise that he had not thought of praying. What should he say? To what could he pray?

He tried not to think of that whizzing Triangle, that seemed now to be nailed like a Catherine-wheel to the very centre of his forehead, and yet at the same time to be at the apex of the universe. Against that—for protection against that—he was praying. It was by a great effort that at last he pronounced the words:

"Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord . . ."

Presently he had turned up his light, and was

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prowling about the room. The clear inky dinginess that comes before the raw dawn of a spring morning found his white face at the window, looking out upon the great terrace and the park.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE WEAR AND TEAR OF EPISCOPACY

§ 1

It was only in the last few years that the bishop had experienced these nervous and mental crises. He was a belated doubter. Whatever questionings had marked his intellectual adolescence had either been very slight or had been too adequately answered to leave any serious scars upon his convictions.

And even now he felt that he was afflicted physically rather than mentally, that some protective padding of nerve-sheath or brain-case had worn thin and weak, and left him a prey to strange disturbances, rather than that any new process of thought was eating into his mind. These doubts in his mind were still not really doubts; they were rather alien and, for the first time, uncontrolled movements of his intelligence. He had had a sheltered upbringing; he was the well-connected son of a comfortable rectory, the only son and sole survivor of a family of three; he had been carefully instructed and he had been a willing learner; it had been easy and natural to take many things for granted. It had been very easy and pleasant for him to take the world as he found it and God as he found Him. Indeed for all his years up to manhood he had been able to take life exactly as in his infancy he took his carefully warmed and prepared bottle—unquestioningly and beneficially.

And indeed that has been the way with most bishops since bishops began.

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It is a busy continuous process that turns boys into bishops, and it will stand few jars or discords. The student of ecclesiastical biography will find that an early vocation has in every age been almost universal among them; few are there among these lives that do not display the incipient bishop from the tenderest years. Bishop How of Wakefield composed hymns before he was eleven, and Archbishop Benson when scarcely older possessed a little oratory in which he conducted services and—a pleasant touch of the more secular boy—which he protected from a too inquisitive sister by means of a booby trap. It is rare that those marked for episcopal dignities go so far into the outer world as Archbishop Lang of York, who began as a barrister. This early predestination has always been the common episcopal experience. Archbishop Benson's early attempts at religious services remind one both of St. Thomas Becket, the "boy bishop," and those early ceremonies of St. Athanasius which were observed and inquired upon by the good Bishop Alexander. (For though still a tender infant, St. Athanasius with perfect correctness and validity was baptising a number of his innocent playmates, and the bishop who "had paused to contemplate the sports of the child remained to confirm the zeal of the missionary.") And as with the bishop of the past, so with the bishop of the future, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, in his story of his soul's pilgrimage, has given us a pleasant picture of himself as a child stealing out into the woods to build himself a little altar.

Such minds as these, settled as it were from the

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outset, are either incapable of real scepticism or become sceptical only after catastrophic changes. They understand the sceptical mind with difficulty, and their beliefs are regarded by the sceptical mind with incredulity. They have determined their forms of belief before their years of discretion, and once those forms are determined they are not very easily changed. Within the shell it has adopted the intelligence may be active and lively enough, may indeed be extraordinarily active and lively, but only within the shell.

There is an entire difference in the mental quality of those who are converts to a faith and those who are brought up in it. The former know it from outside as well as from within. They know not only that it is but also that it is not. The latter have a confidence in their creed that is one with their apprehension of sky or air or gravitation. It is a primary mental structure, and they not only do not doubt but they doubt the good faith of those who do. They think that the Atheist and Agnostic really believe but are impelled by a mysterious obstinacy to deny. So it had been with the Bishop of Princhester; not of cunning or design but in simple good faith he had accepted all the inherited assurances of his native rectory, and held by Church, Crown, Empire, decorum, respectability, solvency—and compulsory Greek at the Little Go—as his father had done before him. If in his undergraduate days he had said a thing or two in the modern vein, affected the socialism of William Morris and learned some Swinburne by heart, it was out of a conscious wildness.

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He did not wish to be a prig. He had taken a far more genuine interest in the artistry of ritual.

Through all the time of his incumbency of the church of the Holy Innocents, St. John's Wood, and of his career as the bishop suffragan of Pinner, he had never faltered from his profound confidence in those standards of his home. He had been kind, popular, and endlessly active. His undergraduate socialism had expanded simply and sincerely into a theory of administrative philanthropy. He knew the Webbs. He was as successful with working-class audiences as with fashionable congregations. His home life with Lady Ella (she was the daughter of the fifth Earl of Birkenholme) and his five little girls was simple, beautiful, and happy as few homes are in these days of confusion. Until he became Bishop of Princhester—he followed Hood, the first bishop, as the reign of his Majesty King Edward the Peacemaker drew to its close—no anticipation of his coming distress fell across his path.

§ 2

He came to Princhester an innocent and trustful man. The home life at the old rectory of Otteringham was still his standard of truth and reality. London had not disillusioned him. It was a strange waste of people, it made him feel like a missionary in infidel parts, but it was a kindly waste. It was neither antagonistic nor malicious. He had always felt there that if he searched his Londoner to the

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bottom, he would find the completest recognition of the old rectory and all its data and implications.

But Princhester was different.

Princhester made one think that recently there had been a second and much more serious Fall.

Princhester was industrial and unashamed. It was a countryside savagely invaded by forges and mine-shafts and gaunt black things. It was scarred and impeded and discoloured. Even before that invasion, when the heather was not in flower it must have been a black country. Its people were dour uncandid individuals, who slanted their heads and knitted their brows to look at you. Occasionally one saw woods brown and blistered by the gases from chemical works. Here and there remained cosy rectories closely reminiscent of the dear old home at Otteringham, jostled and elbowed and overshadowed by horrible iron cylinders belching smoke and flame. The fine abbey church of Princhester, which was the cathedral of the new diocese, looked when first he saw it like a lady Abbess who had taken to drink and slept in a coal-truck. She minced apologetically upon the market-place; the parvenu Town Hall patronised and protected her as if she were a poor relation. . . .

The old aristocracy of the countryside was unpicturesquely decayed. The branch of the Walshinghams, Lady Ella's cousins, who lived near Pringle, was poor, proud, and ignoble. And extremely unpopular. The rich people of the country were self-made and inclined to nonconformity, the working people were not strictly speaking a "poor," they

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were highly paid, badly housed, and deeply resentful. They went in vast droves to football-matches, and did not care a rap if it rained. The prevailing wind was sarcastic. To come here from London was to come from atmospheric blue-greys to ashen-greys, from smoke and soft smut to grime and black grimness.

The bishop had been charmed by the historical associations of Princhester when first the see was put before his mind. His realisation of his diocese was a profound shock.

Only one hint had he had of what was coming. He had met during his season of congratulations Lord Gatling dining unusually at the Athenæum. Lord Gatling and he did not talk frequently, but on this occasion the great racing peer came over to him. "You will feel like a cherub in a stoke-hole," Lord Gatling had said. . . .

"They used to heave lumps of slag at old Hood's gaiters," said Lord Gatling.

"In London a bishop's a lord and a lark and nobody minds him," said Lord Gatling, "but Princhester is different. It isn't used to bishops. . . . Well—I hope you'll get to like 'em."

§ 3

Trouble began with a fearful row about the position of the bishop's palace. Hood had always evaded this question, and a number of strong-willed self-made men of wealth and influence, full of local patriotism and that competitive spirit which has made

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England what it is, already intensely irritated by Hood's prevarications, were resolved to pin his successor to an immediate decision. Of this the new bishop was unaware. Mindful of a bishop's constant need to travel, he was disposed to seek a home within easy reach of Pringle Junction, from which nearly every point in the diocese could be simply and easily reached. This fell in with Lady Ella's liking for the rare rural quiet of the Kibe valley and the neighbourhood of her cousins the Walshinghams. Unhappily it did not fall in with the inflexible resolution of each and every one of the six leading towns of the see to put up, own, obtrude, boast, and swagger about the biggest and showiest thing in episcopal palaces in all industrial England, and the new bishop had already taken a short lease and gone some way towards the acquisition of Ganford House, two miles from Pringle, before he realised the strength and fury of these local ambitions.

At first the magnates and influences seemed to be fighting only among themselves, and he was so ill advised as to broach the Ganford House project as a compromise that would glorify no one unfairly, and leave the erection of an episcopal palace for some future date when he perhaps would have the good fortune to have passed to "where beyond these voices there is peace," forgetting altogether among other oversights the importance in local affairs of architects and builders. His proposal seemed for a time to concentrate the rich passions of the whole countryside upon himself and his wife.

Because they did not leave Lady Ella alone. The

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Walshinghams were already unpopular in their county on account of a poverty and shyness that made them seem "stuck up" to successful captains of industry only too ready with the hand of friendship, the iron grip indeed of friendship, consciously hospitable and eager for admission and indorsements. And Princhester in particular was under the sway of that enterprising weekly, *The White Blackbird*, which was illustrated by, which indeed monopolised the gifts of, that brilliant young caricaturist "The Snicker."

It had seemed natural for Lady Ella to acquiesce in the proposals of the leading Princhester photographer. She had always helped where she could in her husband's public work, and she had been popular upon her own merits in Wealdstone. The portrait was abominable enough in itself; it dwelt on her chin, doubled her age, and denied her gentleness, but it was a mere starting-point for the subtle extravagance of The Snicker's poisonous gift. . . . The thing came upon the bishop suddenly from the book-stall at Pringle Junction.

He kept it carefully from Lady Ella. . . . It was only later that he found that a copy of *The White Blackbird* had been sent to her, and that she was keeping the horror from him. It was in her vein that she should reproach herself for being a vulnerable side to him.

Even when the bishop capitulated in favour of Princhester, that decision only opened a fresh trouble for him. Princhester wanted the palace to be a palace; it wanted to combine all the best points of

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Lambeth and Fulham with the marble splendours of a good modern bank. The bishop's architectural tastes, on the other hand, were rationalistic. He was all for building a useful palace in undertones, with a green slate roof and long horizontal lines. What he wanted more than anything else was a quite remote wing with a lot of bright little bedrooms and a sitting-room and so on, complete in itself, examination hall and everything, with a long intricate connecting passage and several doors, to prevent the ordination candidates straying all over the place and getting into the talk and the tea. But the diocese wanted a proud archway—and turrets, and did not care a rap if the ordination candidates slept about on the carpets in the bishop's bedroom. Ordination candidates were quite outside the sphere of its imagination.

And he disappointed Princhester with his equipage. Princhester had a feeling that it deserved more for coming over to the church from nonconformity as it was doing. It wanted a bishop in a mitre and a gilt coach. It wanted a pastoral crook. It wanted something to go with its mace and its mayor. And (obsessed by *The Snicker*) it wanted less of Lady Ella. The cruelty and unreason of these attacks upon his wife distressed the bishop beyond measure, and baffled him hopelessly. He could not see any means of checking them nor of defending or justifying her against them.

The palace was awaiting its tenant, but the controversies and bitternesses were still swinging and swaying and developing when King George was being crowned. Close upon that event came a wave of

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social discontent, the great railway strike, a curious sense of social and political instability, and the first beginnings of the bishop's ill health.

§ 4

There came a day of exceptional fatigue and significance.

The industrial trouble was a very real distress to the bishop. He had a firm belief that it is a function of the church to act as mediator between employer and employed. It was a common saying of his that the aim of socialism—the right sort of socialism—was to Christianise employment. Regardless of suspicion on either hand, regardless of very distinct hints that he should “mind his own business,” he exerted himself in a search for methods of reconciliation. He sought out every one who seemed likely to be influential on either side, and did his utmost to discover the conditions of a settlement. As far as possible and with the help of a not very efficient chaplain he tried to combine such interviews with his more normal visiting.

At times, and this was particularly the case on this day, he seemed to be discovering nothing but the incurable perversity and militancy of human nature. It was a day under an east wind, when a steely-blue sky full of colourless light filled a stiff-necked world with whitish high lights and inky shadows. These bright harsh days of barometric high pressure in England rouse and thwart every expectation of the happiness of spring. And as the bishop drove through

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the afternoon in a hired fly along a rutted road of slag between fields that were bitterly wired against the Sunday trespasser, he fell into a despondent meditation upon the political and social outlook.

His thoughts were of a sort not uncommon in those days. The world was strangely restless. Since the passing of Victoria the Great there had been an accumulating uneasiness in the national life. It was as if some compact and dignified paper-weight had been lifted from people's ideas, and as if at once they had begun to blow about anyhow. Not that Queen Victoria had really been a paper-weight or any weight at all, but it happened that she died as an epoch closed, an epoch of tremendous stabilities. Her son, already elderly, had followed as the selvage follows the piece, he had passed and left the new age stripped bare. In nearly every department of economic and social life now there was upheaval, and it was an upheaval very different in character from the radicalism and liberalism of the Victorian days. There were not only doubt and denial, but now there were also impatience and unreason. People argued less and acted quicker. There was a pride in rebellion for its own sake, an indiscipline and disposition to sporadic violence that made it extremely hard to negotiate any reconciliations or compromises. Behind every extremist it seemed stood a further extremist prepared to go one better. . . .

The bishop had spent most of the morning with one of the big employers, a tall dark man, lean and nervous, and obviously tired and worried by the struggle. He did not conceal his opinion that the

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church was meddling with matters quite outside its sphere. Never had it been conveyed to the bishop before how remote a rich and established Englishman could consider the church from reality.

"You've got no hold on them," he said. "It isn't your sphere."

And again: "They'll listen to you—if you speak well. But they don't believe you know anything about it, and they don't trust your good intentions. They won't mind a bit what you say unless you drop something they can use against us."

The bishop tried a few phrases. He thought there might be hope in co-operation, in profit-sharing, in some more permanent relationship between the business and the employee.

"There isn't," said the employer compactly. "It's just the malice of being inferior against the man in control. It's just the spirit of insubordination and boredom with duty. This trouble's as old as the Devil."

"But that is exactly the business of the church," said the bishop brightly, "to reconcile men to their duty."

"By chanting the Athanasian creed at 'em, I suppose," said the big employer, betraying the sneer he had been hiding hitherto.

"This thing is a fight," said the big employer, carrying on before the bishop could reply. "Religion had better get out of the streets until this thing is over. The men won't listen to reason. They don't mean to. They're bit by Syndicalism. They're setting out, I tell you, to be unreasonable and impos-

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sible. It isn't an argument; it's a fight. They don't *want* to make friends with the employer. They want to make an end of the employer. Whatever we give them they'll take and press us for more. Directly we make terms with the leaders the men go behind it. . . . It's a raid on the whole system. They don't mean to work the system—anyhow. I'm the capitalist, and the capitalist has to go. I'm to be bundled out of my works, and some—some"—he seemed to be rejecting unsuitable words—"confounded politician put in. Much good it would do them. But before that happens I'm going to fight. *You* would."

The bishop walked to the window and stood staring at the brilliant spring bulbs in the big employer's garden, and at a long vista of newly mown lawn under great shapely trees just budding into green.

"I can't admit," he said, "that these troubles lie outside the sphere of the church."

The employer came and stood beside him. He felt he was being a little hard on the bishop, but he could not see any way of making things easier.

"One doesn't want Sacred Things," he tried, "in a scrap like this.

"We've got to mend things or end things," continued the big employer. "Nothing goes on for ever. Things can't last as they are going on now. . . ."

Then he went on abruptly to something that for a time he had been keeping back.

"Of course just at present the church *may* do a confounded lot of harm. Some of you clerical gentlemen are rather too fond of talking socialism and even preaching socialism. Don't think I want to be over-

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critical. I admit there's no end of things to be said for a proper sort of socialism; Ruskin, and all that. We're all socialists nowadays. Ideals—excellent. But—it gets misunderstood. It gives the men a sense of moral support. It makes them fancy that they are It. Encourages them to forget duties and set up preposterous claims. Class war and all that sort of thing. You gentlemen of the clergy don't quite realise that socialism may begin with Ruskin and end with Karl Marx. And that from the Class War to the Commune is just one step."

§ 5

From this conversation the bishop had made his way to the vicarage of Mogham Banks. The vicar of Mogham Banks was a sacerdotal socialist of the most advanced type, with the reputation of being closely in touch with the labour extremists. He was a man addicted to banners, prohibited ornaments, special services at unusual hours, and processions in the streets. His taste in chasubles was loud, he gardened in a cassock and, it was said, he slept in his biretta; he certainly slept in a hair shirt, and he littered his church with flowers, candles, side-altars, confessional boxes, requests for prayers for the departed, and the like. There had already been two Kensitite demonstrations at his services, and altogether he was a source of considerable anxiety to the bishop. The bishop did his best not to know too exactly what was going on at Mogham Banks. Sooner

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or later he felt he would be forced to do something—and the longer he could put that off the better. But the Rev. Morrice Deans had promised to get together three or four prominent labour leaders for tea and a frank talk, and the opportunity was one not to be missed. So the bishop, after a hasty and not too digestible lunch in the refreshment-room at Pringle, was now in a fly that smelled of straw and suggested infectious hospital patients, on his way through the industry-scarred countryside to this second conversation.

The countryside had never seemed so scarred to him as it did that day.

It was probably the bright hard spring sunshine that emphasised the contrast between that dear England of hedges and homes and the south-west wind in which his imagination lived, and the crude presences of a mechanical age. Never before had the cuttings and heapings, the smashing down of trees, the obtrusion of corrugated iron and tar, the belchings of smoke and the haste, seemed so harsh and disregardful of all the bishop's world. Across the fields a line of gaunt iron standards, abominably designed, carried an electric cable to some unknown end. The curve of the hill made them seem a little out of the straight, as if they hurried and bent forward furtively.

"Where are they going?" asked the bishop, leaning forward to look out of the window of the fly, and then: "Where is it all going?"

And presently the road was under repair, and was being done at a great pace with a huge steam-roller, mechanically smashed granite, and kettles of stink-

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ing stuff, asphalt or something of that sort, that looked and smelled like Milton's hell. Beyond, a gaunt hoarding advertised extensively the Princhester Music Hall, a mean beastly place that corrupted boys and girls; and also it clamoured of tires and potted meats. . . .

The afternoon's conference gave him no reassuring answer to his question, "Where is it all going?"

The afternoon's conference did no more than intensify the new and strange sense of alienation from the world that the morning's talk had evoked.

The three labour extremists that Morrice Deans had assembled obviously liked the bishop and found him picturesque, and were not above a certain snob-bish gratification at the purple-trimmed company they were in, but it was clear that they regarded his intervention in the great dispute as if it were a feeble waving from the bank across the waters of a great river.

"There's an incurable misunderstanding between the modern employer and the modern employed," the chief labour spokesman said, speaking in a broad accent that completely hid from him and the bishop and every one the fact that he was by far the best-read man of the party. "Disraeli called them the Two Nations, but that was long ago. Now it's a case of two species. Machinery has made them into different species. The employer lives away from his work-people, marries a wife foreign, out of a county family or suchlike, trains his children from their very birth in a different manner. Why, the growth curve is different for the two species. They haven't even a com-

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mon speech between them. One looks east and the other looks west. How can you expect them to agree? Of course they won't agree. We've got to fight it out. *They* say we're their slaves for ever. Have you ever read Lady Bell's 'At the Works'? A well-intentioned woman, but she gives the whole thing away. *We* say, No! It's our sort and not your sort. We'll do without you. We'll get a little more education and then we'll do without you. We're pressing for all we can get, and when we've got that we'll take breath and press for more. We're the Morlocks. Coming up. It isn't *our* fault that we've differentiated."

"But you haven't understood the drift of Christianity," said the bishop. "It's just to assert that men are One community and not two."

"There's not much of that in the Creeds," said a second labour leader who was a rationalist. "There's not much of that in the services of the church."

The vicar spoke before his bishop, and indeed he had plenty of time to speak before his bishop. "Because you will not set yourselves to understand the symbolism of her ritual," he said.

"If the church chooses to speak in riddles," said the rationalist.

"Symbols," said Morrice Deans, "need not be riddles," and for a time the talk eddied about this minor issue and the chief labour spokesman and the bishop looked at one another. The vicar instanced and explained certain apparently insignificant observances, his antagonist was contemptuously polite to these explanations. "That's all very pratty," he said. . . .

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The bishop wished that fine points of ceremonial might have been left out of the discussion.

Something much bigger than that was laying hold of his intelligence, the realisation of a world extravagantly out of hand. The sky, the wind, the telegraph-poles, had been jabbing in the harsh lesson of these men's voices, that the church, as people say, "wasn't in it." And that at the same time the church held the one remedy for all this ugliness and contention in its teaching of the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of men. Only for some reason he hadn't the phrases and he hadn't the voice to assert this over their wrangling and their stiff resolution. He wanted to think the whole business out thoroughly, for the moment he had nothing to say, and there was the labour leader opposite waiting smilingly to hear what he had to say so soon as the bout between the vicar and the rationalist was over. . . .

§ 6

That morning in the long galleries of the bishop's imagination a fresh painting had been added. It was a big wall-painting rather in the manner of Puvis de Chavannes. And the central figure had been the Bishop of Princhester himself. He had been standing upon the steps of the great door of the cathedral that looks upon the market-place where the tram-lines meet, and he had been dressed very magnificently and rather after the older use. He had been wearing a tunicle and dalmatic under a chasuble, a pectoral cross, purple gloves, sandals and buskins, a

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mitre and his presentation ring. In his hand he had borne his pastoral staff. And the clustering pillars and arches of the great doorway were painted with a loving flat particularity that omitted nothing but the sooty tinge of the later discolorations.

On his right hand had stood a group of employers very richly dressed in the fashion of the fifteenth century, and on the left a rather more numerous group of less decorative artisans. With them their wives and children had been shown, all greatly impressed by the canonicals. Every one had been extremely respectful.

He had been reconciling the people and blessing them and calling them his "sheep" and his "little children."

But all this was so different.

Neither party resembled sheep or little children in the least degree. . . .

The labour leader became impatient with the ritualistic controversy; he set his teacup aside out of danger and leaned across the corner of the table to the bishop and spoke in a sawing undertone. "You see," he said, "the church does not talk our language. I doubt if it understands our language. I doubt if we understand clearly where we are ourselves. These things have to be fought out and hammered out. It's a big dusty dirty noisy job. It may be a bloody job before it's through. You can't suddenly call a halt in the middle of the scrap and have a sort of millennium just because you want it. . . .

"Of course if the church had a plan," he said, "if it had a proposal to make, if it had anything more

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than a few pious palliatives to suggest, that might be different. But has it?"

The bishop had a bankrupt feeling. On the spur of the moment he could say no more than: "It offers its mediation."

§ 7

Full as he was with the preoccupation of these things and so a little slow and inattentive in his movements, the bishop had his usual luck at Pringle Junction and just missed the 7.27 for Princhester. He might perhaps have got it by running through the subway and pushing past people, but bishops must not run through subways and push past people. His mind swore at the mischance, even if his lips refrained.

He was hungry and tired; he would not get to the palace now until long after nine; dinner would be over and Lady Ella would naturally suppose he had dined early with the Rev. Morrice Deans. Very probably there would be nothing ready for him at all.

He tried to think he was exercising self-control, but indeed all his subconscious self was busy, in a manner that would not have disgraced Tertullian, with the eternal welfare of those city fathers whose obstinacy had fixed the palace at Princhester. He walked up and down the platform, gripping his hands very tightly behind him, and maintaining a serene upcast countenance by a steadfast effort. It seemed a small matter to him that the placards of the local evening papers should proclaim "Lloyd George's

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Reconciliation Meeting at Wombash Broken Up by Suffragettes." For a year now he had observed a strict rule against buying the products of the local press, and he saw no reason for varying this protective regulation.

His mind was full of angry helplessness.

Was he to blame, was the church to blame, for its powerlessness in these social disputes? Could an abler man with a readier eloquence have done more?

He envied the cleverness of Cardinal Manning. Manning would have got right into the front of this affair. He would have accumulated credit for his church and himself. . . .

But would he have done much? . . .

The bishop wandered along the platform to its end, and stood contemplating the convergent ways that gather together beyond the station and plunge into the hillside and the wilderness of sidings and trucks, signal-boxes, huts, coal-pits, electric standards, goods sheds, turntables and engine-houses, that ends in a bluish bricked-up cliff against the hill. A train rushed with a roar and clatter into the throat of the great tunnel and was immediately silenced; its rear lights twinkled and vanished, and then out of that huge black throat came wisps of white steam and curled slowly upward like lazy snakes until they caught the slanting sunshine. For the first time the day betrayed a softness and touched this scene of black energy to gold. All late afternoons are beautiful, whatever the day has been—if only there is a gleam of sun. And now a kind of mechanical greatness took the place of mere black disorder in the

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bishop's perception of his see. It was harsh, it was vast and strong, it was no lamb he had to rule but a dragon. Would it ever be given to him to overcome his dragon, to lead it home, and bless it?

He stood at the very end of the platform, with his gaitered legs wide apart and his hands folded behind him, staring beyond all visible things.

Should he do something very bold and striking? Should he invite both men and masters to the cathedral, and preach tremendous sermons to them upon these living issues?

Short sermons, of course. . . .

But stating the church's attitude with a new and convincing vigour. . . .

He had a vision of the great aisle strangely full and alive and astir. The organ notes still echoed in the fretted vaulting, as the preacher made his way from the chancel to the pulpit. The congregation was tense with expectation, and for some reason his mind dwelt for a long time upon the figure of the preacher ascending the steps of the pulpit. Outside the day was dark and stormy, so that the stained-glass windows looked absolutely dead. For a little while the preacher prayed. Then in the attentive silence the tenor of the preacher would begin, a thin jet of sound, a ray of light in the darkness, speaking to all these men as they had never been spoken to before. . . .

Surely so one might call a halt to all these harsh conflicts. So one might lay hands afresh upon these stubborn minds, one might win them round to look at Christ the Master and Servant. . . .

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That, he thought, would be a good phrase: "Christ the Master and Servant." . . .

"Members of one Body," that should be his text. . . .

At last it was finished. The big congregation, which had kept so still, sighed and stirred. The task of reconciliation was as good as done. "And now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. . . ."

Outside the day had become suddenly bright, the threatening storm had drifted away, and great shafts of coloured light from the pictured windows were smiting like arrows amidst his hearers. . . .

This idea of a great sermon upon capital and labour did so powerfully grip the bishop's imagination that he came near to losing the 8.27 train also.

He discovered it when it was already in the station. He had to walk down the platform very quickly. He did not run, but his gaiters, he felt, twinkled more than a bishop's should.

§ 8

Directly he met his wife he realised that he had to hear something important and unpleasant.

She stood waiting for him in the inner hall, looking very grave and still. The light fell upon her pale face and her dark hair and her long white silken dress, making her seem more delicate and unworldly than usual and making the bishop feel grimy and sordid.

"I must have a wash," he said, though before he

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had thought of nothing but food. "I have had nothing to eat since tea-time—and that was mostly talk."

Lady Ella considered. "There are cold things. . . . You shall have a tray in the study. Not in the dining-room. Eleanor is there. I want to tell you something. But go up-stairs first and wash your poor tired face."

"Nothing serious, I hope?" he asked, struck by an unusual quality in her voice.

"I will tell you," she evaded, and after a moment of mutual scrutiny he went past her up-stairs.

Since they had come to Princhester Lady Ella had changed very markedly. She seemed to her husband to have gained in dignity; she was stiller and more restrained; a certain faint arrogance, a touch of the "ruling class" manner, had dwindled almost to the vanishing point. There had been a time when she had inclined to an authoritative hauteur, when she had seemed likely to develop into one of those aggressive and interfering old ladies who play so overwhelming a part in British public affairs. She had been known to initiate adverse judgments, to exercise the snub, to cut and humiliate. Princhester had done much to purge her of such tendencies. Princhester had made her think abundantly, and had put a new and subtler quality into her beauty. It had taken away the least little disposition to rustle as she moved, and it had softened her voice.

Now, when presently she stood in the study, she showed a new circumspection in her treatment of her husband. She surveyed the tray before him.

"You ought not to drink that Burgundy," she said. "I can see you are dog-tired. It was uncorked

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yesterday, and anyhow it is not very digestible. This cold meat is bad enough. You ought to have one of those quarter bottles of champagne you got for my last convalescence. There's more than a dozen left over."

The bishop felt that this was a pretty return of his own kindly thoughts "after many days," and soon Dunk, his valet-butler, was pouring out the precious and refreshing glassful. . . .

"And now, dear?" said the bishop, feeling already much better.

Lady Ella had come round to the marble fireplace. The mantelpiece was a handsome work by a Princhester artist in the Gill style—with contemplative ascetics as supporters.

"I am worried about Eleanor," said Lady Ella.

"She is in the dining-room now," she said, "having some dinner. She came in about a quarter past eight, half-way through dinner."

"Where had she been?" asked the bishop.

"Her dress was torn—in two places. Her wrist had been twisted and a little sprained."

"My dear!"

"Her face— Grubby! And she had been crying."

"But, my dear, what had happened to her? You don't mean——?"

Husband and wife stared at one another aghast. Neither of them said the horrid word that flamed between them.

"Merciful Heaven!" said the bishop, and assumed an attitude of despair.

"I didn't know she knew any of them. But it

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seems it is the second Walshingham girl—Phoebe. It's impossible to trace a girl's thoughts and friends. She persuaded her to go."

"But did she understand?"

"That's the serious thing," said Lady Ella.

She seemed to consider whether he could bear the blow. "She understands all sorts of things. She argues. . . . I am quite unable to argue with her."

"About this vote business?"

"About all sorts of things. Things I didn't imagine she had heard of. I knew she had been reading books. But I never imagined that she could have understood. . . ."

The bishop laid down his knife and fork.

"One may read in books, one may even talk of things, without fully understanding," he said.

Lady Ella tried to entertain this comforting thought. "It isn't like that," she said at last. "She talks like a grown-up person. This—this escapade is just an accident. But things have gone further than that. She seems to think—that she is not being educated properly here, that she ought to go to a college. As if we were keeping things from her. . . ."

The bishop reconsidered his plate.

"But what things?" he said.

"She says we get all round her," said Lady Ella, and left the implications of that phrase to unfold.

§ 9

For a time the bishop said very little.

Lady Ella had found it necessary to make her first announcement standing behind him upon the hearth-

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rug, but now she sat upon the arm of the great arm-chair as close to him as possible, and spoke in a more familiar tone.

The thing, she said, had come to her as a complete surprise. Everything had seemed so safe. Eleanor had been thoughtful, it was true, but it had never occurred to her mother that she had really been thinking—about such things as she had been thinking about. She had ranged in the library, and displayed a disposition to read the weekly papers and the monthly reviews. But never a sign of discontent.

“But I don’t understand,” said the bishop. “Why is she discontented? What is there that she wants different?”

“Exactly,” said Lady Ella.

“She has got this idea that life here is secluded in some way,” she expanded. “She used words like ‘secluded’ and ‘artificial’ and—what was it?—‘cloistered.’ And she said——”

Lady Ella paused with an effect of exact retrospection.

“‘Out there,’ she said, ‘things are alive. Real things are happening.’ It is almost as if she did not fully believe——”

Lady Ella paused again.

The bishop sat with his arm over the back of his chair, and his face downcast.

“The ferment of youth,” he said at last. “The ferment of youth. Who has given her these ideas?”

Lady Ella did not know. She would have thought a school like St. Aubyns safe, but nowadays nothing was safe. It was clear the girls who went there talked

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—as girls a generation ago did not talk. Their people at home encouraged them to talk and profess opinions about everything. It seemed that Phoebe Walshingham and Lady Kitty Kingdom were the leaders in these premature mental excursions. Phoebe aired religious doubts.

“But little Phoebe!” said the bishop.

“Kitty,” said Lady Ella, “has written a novel.”

“Already!”

“With elopements in it—and all sorts of things. She’s had it typed. You’d think Mary Crosshampton would know better than to let her daughter go flourishing the family imagination about in that way.”

“Eleanor told you?”

“By way of showing that they think of—things in general.”

The bishop reflected. “She wants to go to college.”

“They want to go in a set.”

“I wonder if college can be much worse than school. . . . She’s eighteen—? But I will talk to her. . . .”

§ 10

All our children are changelings. They are perpetually fresh strangers. Every day they vanish and a new person masquerades as yesterday’s child until some unexpected development betrays the cheat.

The bishop had still to learn this perennial newness of the young. He learned it in half an hour at the end of a fatiguing day.

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He went into the dining-room. He went in as carelessly as possible and smoking a cigarette. He had an honourable dread of being portentous in his family; almost ostentatiously he laid the bishop aside. Eleanor had finished her meal, and was sitting in the armchair by the fire with one hand holding her sprained wrist.

"Well," he said, and strolled to the hearth-rug.

He had had an odd idea that he would find her still dirty, torn, and tearful, as her mother had described her, a little girl in a scrape. But she had changed into her best white evening frock and put up her hair, and became in the firelight more of a lady, a very young lady but still a lady, than she had ever been to him before. She was dark like her mother, but not of the same willowy type; she had more of her father's sturdy build, and she had developed her shoulders at hockey and tennis. The firelight brought out the gracious reposeful lines of a body that ripened in adolescence. And though there was a vibration of resolution in her voice she spoke like one who is under her own control.

"Mother has told you that I have disgraced myself," she began.

"No," said the bishop, weighing it. "No. But you seem to have been indiscreet, little Norah."

"I got excited," she said. "They began turning out the other women—roughly. I was indignant."

"You didn't go to interrupt?" he asked.

She considered. "No," she said. "But I went."

He liked her disposition to get it right. "On that side," he assisted.

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"It isn't the same thing as really meaning, Daddy," she said.

"And then things happened?"

"Yes," she said to the fire.

A pause followed. If they had been in a law-court, her barrister would have said, "That is my case, my lord." The bishop prepared to open the next stage in the proceedings.

"I think, Norah, you shouldn't have been there at all," he said.

"Mother says that."

"A man in my position is apt to be judged by his family. You commit more than yourself when you commit an indiscretion. Apart from that, it wasn't the place for a girl to be at. You are not a child now. We give you freedom—more freedom than most girls get—because we think you will use it wisely. You knew—enough to know that there was likely to be trouble."

The girl looked into the fire and spoke very carefully. "I don't think that I oughtn't to know the things that are going on."

The bishop studied her face for an instant. It struck him that they had reached something very fundamental as between parent and child. His modernity showed itself in the temperance of his reply.

"Don't you think, my dear, that on the whole your mother and I, who have lived longer and know more, are more likely to know when it is best that you should begin to know—this or that?"

The girl knitted her brows and seemed to be read-

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ing her answer out of the depths of the coals. She was on the verge of speaking, altered her mind and tried a different beginning.

"I think that every one must do their thinking—his thinking—for—oneself," she said awkwardly.

"You mean you can't trust——?"

"It isn't trusting. But one knows best for oneself when one is hungry."

"And you find yourself hungry?"

"I want to find out for myself what all this trouble about votes and things means."

"And we starve you—intellectually?"

"You know I don't think that. But you are busy. . . ."

"Aren't you being perhaps a little impatient, Eleanor? After all—you are barely eighteen. . . . We have given you all sorts of liberties."

Her silence admitted it. "But still," she said after a long pause, "there are other girls, younger than I am, *in* these things. They talk about—oh, all sorts of things. Freely. . . ."

"You've been awfully good to me," she said irrelevantly. "And of course this meeting was all pure accident."

Father and daughter remained silent for a while, seeking a better grip.

"What exactly do you want, Eleanor?" he asked.

She looked up at him. "Generally?" she asked.

"Your mother has the impression that you are discontented."

"Discontented is a horrid word."

"Well—unsatisfied."

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She remained still for a time. She felt the moment had come to make her demand.

"I would like to go to Newnham or Somerville—and work. I feel—so horribly ignorant. Of all sorts of things. If I were a son I should go——"

"Ye—es," said the bishop and reflected.

He had gone rather far in the direction of the Woman Suffrage people; he had advocated equality of standard in all sorts of matters, and the memory of these utterances hampered him.

"You could read here," he tried.

"If I were a son, you wouldn't say that."

His reply was vague. "But in this home," he said, "we have a certain atmosphere. . . ."

He left her to imply her differences in sensibility and response from the hardier male.

Her hesitation marked the full gravity of her reply. "It's just that," she said. "One feels—" She considered it further. "As if we were living in a kind of magic world—not really real. Out there—" she glanced over her shoulder at the drawn blind that hid the night. "One meets with different sorts of minds and different—atmospheres. All this is very beautiful. I've had the most wonderful home. But there's a sort of feeling as though it couldn't really go on, as though all these strikes and doubts and questionings——"

She stopped short at questionings, for the thing was said.

The bishop took her meaning gallantly and honestly.

"The church of Christ, little Norah, is built upon a rock."

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She made no answer. She moved her head very slightly so that he could not see her face, and remained sitting rather stiffly and awkwardly with her eyes upon the fire.

Her silence was the third and greatest blow the bishop received that day. . . .

It seemed very long indeed before either of them spoke. At last he said: "We must talk about these things again, Norah, when we are less tired and have more time. . . . You have been reading books. . . . When Caxton set up his printing-press he thrust a new power between church and disciple and father and child. . . . And I am tired. We must talk it over a little later."

The girl stood up. She took her father's hands. "Dear, dear Daddy," she said, "I am so sorry to be a bother. I am so sorry I went to that meeting. . . . You look tired out."

"We must talk—properly," said the bishop, patting one hand, and then discovering from her wincing face that it was the sprained one. "Your poor wrist," he said.

"It's so hard to talk, but I want to talk to you, Daddy. It isn't that I have hidden things. . . ."

She kissed him, and the bishop had the odd fancy that she kissed him as though she was sorry for him. . . .

It occurred to him that really there could be no time like the present for discussing these "questionings" of hers, and then his fatigue and shyness had the better of him again.

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§ 11

The papers got hold of Eleanor's share in the suffragette disturbance. *The White Blackbird* said things about her.

It did not attack her. It did worse. It admired her . . . impudently.

It spoke of her once as "Norah," and once as "the Scrope Flapper."

Its head-line proclaimed:

"Plucky Flappers Hold Up L. G."

CHAPTER THE THIRD

INSOMNIA

§ 1

THE night after his conversation with Eleanor was the first night of the bishop's insomnia. It was the definite beginning of a new phase in his life.

Doctors explain to us that the immediate cause of insomnia is always some poisoned or depleted state of the body, and no doubt the fatigues and hasty meals of the day had left the bishop in a state of unprecedented chemical disorder, with his nerves irritated by strange compounds and unsoothed by familiar lubricants. But chemical disorders follow mental disturbances, and the core and essence of his trouble was an intellectual distress. For the first time in his life he was really in doubt, about himself, about his way of living, about all his persuasions. It was a general doubt. It was not a specific suspicion upon this point or that. It was a feeling of detachment and unreality at once extraordinarily vague and extraordinarily oppressive. It was as if he discovered himself flimsy and transparent in a world of minatory solidity and opacity. It was as if he found himself made not of flesh and blood but of tissue-paper.

But this intellectual insecurity extended into his physical sensations. It affected his feeling in his skin, as if it were not absolutely his own skin.

INSOMNIA

And as he lay there, a weak phantom mentally and bodily, an endless succession and recurrence of anxieties for which he could find no reassurance besieged him.

Chief of this was his distress for Eleanor.

She was the central figure in this new sense of illusion in familiar and trusted things. It was not only that the world of his existence which had seemed to be the whole universe had become diaphanous and betrayed vast and uncontrollable realities beyond it, but his daughter had as it were suddenly opened a door in this glassy sphere of insecurity that had been his abiding refuge, a door upon the stormy rebel outer world, and she stood there, young, ignorant, confident, adventurous, ready to step out.

Could it be possible that she did not *believe*?

. He saw her very vividly as he had seen her in the dining-room, slender and upright, half child, half woman, so fragile and so fearless. And the door she opened thus carelessly gave upon a stormy background like one of the stormy backgrounds that were popular behind portrait Dianas in eighteenth-century paintings. Did she believe that all he had taught her, all the life he led was—what was her phrase?—a kind of magic world, not really real?

He groaned and turned over and repeated the words: "A kind of magic world—not really real!"

The wind blew through the door she opened, and scattered everything in the room. And still she held the door open.

He was astonished at himself. He started up in swift indignation. Had he not taught the child? Had

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he not brought her up in an atmosphere of faith? What right had she to turn upon him in this manner? It was—indeed it was—a sort of insolence, a lack of reverence. . . .

It was strange he had not perceived this at the time.

But indeed at the first mention of “questionings” he ought to have thundered. He saw that quite clearly now. He ought to have cried out and said: “On your knees, my Norah, and ask pardon of God!”

Because after all faith is an emotional thing. . . .

He began to think very rapidly and copiously of things he ought to have said to Eleanor. And now the eloquence of reverie was upon him. In a little time he was also addressing the tea-party at Morrice Deans’. Upon them too he ought to have thundered. And he knew now also all that he should have said to the recalcitrant employer. Thunder also. Thunder is surely the privilege of the higher clergy—under Jove.

But why hadn’t he thundered?

He gesticulated in the darkness, thrust out a clutching hand.

There are situations that must be *gripped*—gripped firmly. And without delay. In the Middle Ages there had been grip enough in a purple glove.

§ 2

From these belated seizures of the day’s lost opportunities the bishop passed to such a pessimistic

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estimate of the church as had never entered his mind before.

It was as if he had fallen suddenly out of a spiritual balloon into a world of bleak realism. He found himself asking unprecedented and devastating questions, questions that implied the most fundamental shiftings of opinion. Why was the church such a failure? Why had it no grip upon either masters or men amidst this vigorous life of modern industrialism, and why had it no grip upon the questioning young? It was a tolerated thing, he felt, just as sometimes he had felt that the Crown was a tolerated thing. He too was a tolerated thing; a curious survival. . . .

This was not as things should be. He struggled to recover a proper attitude. But he remained enormously dissatisfied. . . .

The church was no Levite to pass by on the other side away from the struggles and wrongs of the social conflict. It had no right when the children asked for the bread of Life to offer them Gothic stone. . . .

He began to make interminable weak plans for fulfilling his duty to his diocese and his daughter.

What could he do to revivify his clergy? He wished he had more personal magnetism, he wished he had a darker and a larger presence. He wished he had not been saddled with Whippham's rather futile son as his chaplain. He wished he had a dean instead of being his own dean. With an unsympathetic rector. He wished he had it in him to make some resounding appeal. He might of course preach a series of thumping addresses and sermons, rather on the lines of "Fors Clavigera," to masters and men, in the

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Cathedral. Only it was so difficult to get either masters or men into the Cathedral. . . .

Well, if the people will not come to the bishop the bishop must go out to the people. Should he go outside the Cathedral—to the place where the trams met?

Interweaving with such thoughts the problem of Eleanor rose again into his consciousness.

Weren't there books she ought to read?

Weren't there books she ought to be *made* to read?

And books—and friends—that ought to be imperatively forbidden? Imperatively!

But how to define the forbidden?

He began to compose an address on Modern Literature (so called).

It became acrimonious. . . .

Before dawn the birds began to sing.

His mind had seemed to be a little tranquillised, there had been a distinct feeling of subsidence sleepward, when first one and then another of God's creatures roused itself and the bishop to greet the gathering daylight.

It became a clamour, a misty sea of sound in which individuality appeared and disappeared. For a time a distant cuckoo was very perceptible, like a landmark looming up over a fog, like the cuckoo in the Pastoral Symphony.

The bishop tried not to heed these sounds, but they were by their very nature insistent sounds. He lay disregarding them acutely.

Presently he pulled the coverlet over his ears.

Later he sat up in bed.

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Again in a slight detail he marked his strange and novel detachment from the world of his upbringing. His hallucination of disillusionment had spread from himself and his church and his faith to the whole animate creation. He knew that these were the voices of "our feathered songsters," that this was "a joyous chorus" greeting the day. He knew that a wakeful bishop ought to bless these happy creatures, and join with them by reciting Ken's morning hymn. He made an effort that was more than half habit, to repeat and he repeated with a scowling face and the voice of a schoolmaster:

"Awake my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run. . . ."

He got no further. He stopped short, sat still, thinking what utterly detestable things singing birds were. A blackbird had gripped his attention. Never had he heard such vain repetitions. He struggled against the dark mood of criticism. "He prayeth best who loveth best——"

No, he did not love the birds. It was useless to pretend. Whatever one may say about other birds a cuckoo is a low detestable cad of a bird.

Then the bishop began to be particularly tormented by a bird that made a short, insistent, wheezing sound at regular intervals of perhaps twenty seconds. If a bird could have whooping-cough, that, he thought, was the sort of whoop it would have. But even if it had whooping-cough he could not pity it. He hung in its intervals waiting for the return of the wheeze.

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And then that blackbird reasserted itself. It had a rich boastful note; it seemed proud of its noisy reiteration of simple self-assertion. For some obscure reason the phrase "oleographic sounds" drifted into the bishop's thoughts. This bird produced the peculiar and irrational impression that it had recently made a considerable sum of money by shrewd industrialism. It was, he thought grimly, a genuine Prichester blackbird.

This wickedly uncharitable reference to his diocese ran all unchallenged through the bishop's mind. And others no less wicked followed it.

Once during his summer holidays in Florence he and Lady Ella had subscribed to an association for the protection of song-birds. He recalled this now with a mild wonder. It seemed to him that perhaps after all it was as well to let fruit-growers and Italians deal with singing birds in their own way. Perhaps they had a wisdom. . . .

He passed his hands over his face. The world is not made entirely for singing birds; there is such a thing as proportion. Singing birds may become a luxury, an indulgence, an excess.

Did the birds eat the fruit in Paradise?

Perhaps there they worked for some collective musical effect, had some sort of conductor in the place of this—*hullabaloo*. . . .

He decided to walk about the room for a time and then remake his bed. . . .

The sunrise found the bishop with his head and shoulders out of the window trying to see that blackbird. He just wanted to look at it. He was persuaded it was a quite exceptional blackbird.

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Again came that oppressive sense of the futility of the contemporary church, but this time it came in the most grotesque form. For hanging half out of the casement he was suddenly reminded of St. Francis of Assisi, and how at his rebuke the wheeling swallows stilled their cries.

But it was all so different then.

§ 3

It was only after he had passed four similar nights, with intervening days of lassitude and afternoon siestas, that the bishop realised that he was in the grip of insomnia.

He did not go at once to a doctor, but he told his trouble to every one he met and received much tentative advice. He had meant to have his talk with Eleanor on the morning next after their conversation in the dining-room, but his bodily and spiritual anæmia prevented him.

The fifth night was the beginning of the Whitsuntide Ember week, and he wore a red cassock and had a distracting and rather interesting day welcoming his ordination candidates. They had a good effect upon him; we spiritualise ourselves when we seek to spiritualise others, and he went to bed in a happier frame of mind than he had done since the day of the shock. He woke in the night, but he woke much more himself than he had been since the trouble began. He repeated that verse of Ken's:

“When in the night I sleepless lie,
My soul with heavenly thoughts supply;
Let no ill dreams disturb my rest,
No powers of darkness me molest.”

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Almost immediately after these there floated into his mind, as if it were a message, the dear familiar words:

“He giveth his Beloved sleep.”

These words irradiated and soothed him quite miraculously, the clouds of doubt seemed to dissolve and vanish and leave him safe and calm under a clear sky; he knew those words were a promise, and very speedily he fell asleep and slept until he was called.

But the next day was a troubled one. Whippam had muddled his time-table and crowded his afternoon; the strike of the transport workers had begun, and the ugly noises they made at the tramway depot, where they were booing some one, penetrated into the palace. He had to snatch a meal between services, and the sense of hurry invaded his afternoon lectures to the candidates. He hated hurry in Ember week. His ideal was one of quiet serenity, of grave things said slowly, of still, kneeling figures, of a sort of dark cool spiritual germination. But what sort of dark cool spiritual germination is possible with an ass like Whippam about?

In the fresh courage of the morning the bishop had arranged for that talk with Eleanor he had already deferred too long, and this had proved less satisfactory than he had intended it to be.

The bishop's experience with the ordination candidates was following the usual course. Before they came there was something bordering upon distaste for the coming invasion; then always there was an effect of surprise at the youth and faith of the neo-

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phytes and a real response of the spirit to the occasion. Throughout the first twenty-four hours they were all simply neophytes, without individuality to break up their uniformity of self-devotion. Then afterwards they began to develop little personal traits, and scarcely ever were these pleasing traits. Always one or two of them would begin *haunting* the bishop, giving way to an appetite for special words, special recognitions. He knew the expression of that craving on their faces. He knew the waylaying movements in room and passage that presently began.

This time in particular there was a freckled underbred young man who handed in what was evidently a carefully prepared memorandum upon what he called "my positions." Apparently he had a muddle of doubts about the early fathers and the dates of the earlier authentic copies of the gospels, things of no conceivable significance.

The bishop glanced through this bale of papers—it had of course no index and no synopsis, and some of the pages were not numbered—handed it over to Whippham, and when he proved, as usual, a broken reed, the bishop had the brilliant idea of referring the young man to Canon Bliss (of Pringle), "who has a special knowledge quite beyond my own in this field."

But he knew from the young man's eye even as he said this that it was not going to put him off for more than a day or so.

The immediate result of glancing over these papers was, however, to enhance in the bishop's mind a growing disposition to minimise the importance of all

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dated and explicit evidences and arguments for orthodox beliefs, and to resort to vague symbolic and liberal interpretations; and it was in this state that he came to his talk with Eleanor.

He did not give her much time to develop her objections. He met her half-way and stated them for her, and overwhelmed her with sympathy and understanding. She had been "too literal." "Too literal" was his key-note. He was astonished at the liberality of his own views. He had been getting along now for some years without looking into his own opinions too closely, and he was by no means prepared to discover how far he had come to meet his daughter's scepticisms. But he did meet them. He met them so thoroughly that he almost conveyed that hers was a needlessly conservative and old-fashioned attitude.

Occasionally he felt he was being a trifle evasive, but she did not seem to notice it. As she took his drift, her relief and happiness were manifest. And he had never noticed before how clear and pretty her eyes were; they were the most honest eyes he had ever seen. She looked at him very steadily as he explained, and lit up at his points. She brightened wonderfully as she realised that after all they were not apart, they had not differed; simply they had misunderstood. . . .

And before he knew where he was, and in a mere parenthetical declaration of liberality, he surprised himself by conceding her demand for Newnham even before she had repeated it. It helped his case wonderfully.

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"Call in every exterior witness you can. The church will welcome them. . . . No, I *want* you to go, my dear. . . ."

But his mind was stirred again to its depths by this discussion. And in particular he was surprised and a little puzzled by this Newnham concession and the necessity of making his new attitude clear to Lady Ella. . . .

It was with a sense of fatality that he found himself awake again that night, like some one lying drowned and still and yet perfectly conscious at the bottom of deep cold water.

He repeated, "He giveth his Beloved sleep," but all the conviction had gone out of the words.

§ 4

Neither the bishop's insomnia nor his incertitudes about himself and his faith developed in a simple and orderly manner. There were periods of sustained suffering and periods of recovery; it was not for a year or so that he regarded these troubles as more than acute incidental interruptions of his general tranquillity or realised that he was passing into a new phase of life and into a new quality of thought. He told every one of the insomnia and no one of his doubts; these he betrayed only by an increasing tendency towards vagueness, symbolism, poetry, and toleration. Eleanor seemed satisfied with his exposition; she did not press for further enlightenment. She continued all her outward conformities except that after a time she ceased to communicate; and in

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September she went away to Newnham. Her doubts had not visibly affected Clementina or her other sisters, and the bishop made no further attempts to explore the spiritual life of his family below the surface of its formal acquiescence.

As a matter of fact his own spiritual wrestlings were almost exclusively nocturnal. During his spells of insomnia he led a curiously double existence. In the daytime he was largely the self he had always been, able, assured, ecclesiastical, except that he was a little jaded and irritable or sleepy instead of being quick and bright; he believed in God and the church and the Royal Family and himself securely; in the wakeful night-time he experienced a different and novel self, a bare-minded self, bleakly fearless at its best, shamelessly weak at its worst, critical, sceptical, joyless, anxious. The anxiety was quite the worst element of all. Something sat by his pillow asking grey questions: "What are you doing? Where are you going? Is it really well with the children? Is it really well with the church? Is it really well with the country? Are you indeed doing anything at all? Are you anything more than an actor wearing a costume in an archaic play? *The people turn their backs on you.*"

He would twist over on his pillow. He would whisper hymns and prayers that had the quality of charms.

"He giveth his Beloved sleep"; that answered many times, and many times it failed.

The labour troubles of 1912 eased off as the year wore on, and the bitterness of the local press over the

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palace abated very considerably. Indeed there was something like a watery gleam of popularity when he brought down his consistent friend, the dear old Princess Christiana of Hoch und Unter, black bonnet, deafness, and all, to open a new wing of the children's hospital. The Princhester conservative paper took the occasion to inform the diocese that he was a fluent German scholar and consequently a *persona grata* with the royal aunts, and that the Princess Christiana was merely just one of a number of royalties now practically at the beck and call of Princhester. It was not true, but it was very effective locally, and seemed to justify a little the hauteur of which Lady Ella was so unjustly suspected. Yet it involved a possibility of disappointments in the future.

He went to Brighton-Pomfrey too upon the score of his general health, and Brighton-Pomfrey revised his general regimen, discouraged indiscreet fasting, and suggested a complete abstinence from red wine except white port, if indeed that can be called a red wine, and a moderate use of Egyptian cigarettes.

But 1913 was a strenuous year. The labour troubles revived, the suffragette movement increased greatly in violence and aggressiveness, and there sprang up no less than three ecclesiastical scandals in the diocese. First, the Kensitites set themselves firmly to make presentations and prosecutions against Morrice Deans, who was reserving the sacrament, wearing, they said, "Babylonish garments," going beyond all reason in the matter of infant confession, and generally brightening up Mogham Banks; next,

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a popular preacher in Wombash published a book under the exasperating title, "The Light under the Altar," in which he showed himself as something between an Arian and a Pantheist, and treated the dogma of the Trinity with as little respect as one would show to an intrusive cat; while thirdly an obscure but overworked missionary of a tin mission church in the new working-class district at Pringle, being discovered in some sort of polygamous relationship, had seen fit to publish in pamphlet form a scandalous admission and defence, a pamphlet entitled "Marriage True and False," taking the public needlessly into his completest confidence and quoting the affairs of Abraham and Hosea, reviving many points that are better forgotten about Luther, and appealing also to such uncanonical authorities as Milton, Plato, and John Humphrey Noyes. This abnormal concurrence of indiscipline was extremely unlucky for the bishop. It plunged him into strenuous controversy upon three fronts, so to speak, and involved a great number of personal encounters far too vivid for his mental serenity.

The Pringle polygamist was the most moving as Morrice Deans was the most exacting and troublesome and the Wombash Pantheist the most insidiously destructive figure in these three toilsome disputes. The Pringle man's soul had apparently missed the normal distribution of fig-leaves; he was an illiterate, open-eyed, hard-voiced, freckled, rational-minded creature with large expository hands, who had come by a side way into the church because he was an indefatigable worker, and he insisted upon

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telling the bishop with an irrepressible candour and completeness just exactly what was the matter with his intimate life. The bishop very earnestly did not want these details, and did his utmost to avoid the controversial questions that the honest man pressed respectfully but obstinately upon him.

“Even St. Paul, my lord, admitted that it is better to marry than burn,” said the Pringle misdemeanant, “and here was I, my lord, married and still burning !” and, “I think you would find, my lord, considering all Charlotte’s peculiarities, that the situation was really much more trying than the absolute celibacy St. Paul had in view. . . .”

The bishop listened to these arguments as little as possible, and did not answer them at all. But afterwards the offender came and wept and said he was ruined and heartbroken and unfairly treated because he wasn’t a gentleman, and that was distressing. It was so exactly true—and so inevitable. He had been deprived, rather on account of his voice and apologetics than of his offence, and public opinion was solidly with the sentence. He made a gallant effort to found what he called a Labour Church in Pringle, and after some financial misunderstandings departed with his unambiguous *ménage* to join the advanced movement on the Clyde.

The Morrice Deans inquiry however demanded an amount of erudition that greatly fatigued the bishop. He had a very fair general knowledge of vestments, but he had never really cared for anything but the poetry of ornaments, and he had to work strenuously to master the legal side of the question. Whippam,

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his chaplain, was worse than useless as a helper. The bishop wanted to end the matter as quickly, quietly, and favourably to Morrice Deans as possible; he thought Morrice Deans a thoroughly good man in his parish, and he believed that the substitution of a low churchman would mean a very complete collapse of church influence in Mogham Banks, where people were now completely indurated to a highly ornate service. But Morrice Deans was intractable and his pursuers indefatigable, and on several occasions the bishop sat far into the night devising compromises and equivocations that should make the Kensitites think that Morrice Deans wasn't wearing vestments when he was, and that should make Morrice Deans think he was wearing vestments when he wasn't. And it was Whippham who first suggested green tea as a substitute for coffee, which gave the bishop indigestion, as his stimulant for these nocturnal bouts.

Now green tea is the most lucid of poisons.

And while all this extra activity about Morrice Deans, these vigils and crammings and writings down, were using all and more energy than the bishop could well spare, he was also doing his quiet utmost to keep "The Light under the Altar" case from coming to a head.

This man he hated.

And he dreaded him as well as hated him. Charters, the author of "The Light under the Altar," was a man who not only reasoned closely but indelicately. There was a demonstrating, jeering air about his preaching and writing, and everything he said and did was saturated by the spirit of challenge. He did

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not so much imitate as exaggerate the style of Matthew Arnold. And whatever was done publicly against him would have to be done very publicly because his book had got him a London reputation.

From the bishop's point of view Chasters was one of nature's ignoblemen. He seemed to have subscribed to the Thirty-Nine Articles and passed all the tests and taken all the pledges that stand on the way to ordination, chiefly for the pleasure of attacking them more successfully from the rear; he had been given the living of Wombash by a cousin, and filled it very largely because it was not only more piquant but more remunerative and respectable to be a rationalist lecturer in a surplice. And in a hard kind of ultra-Protestant way his social and parochial work was not badly done. But his sermons were terrible. "He takes a text," said one informant, "and he goes on firstly, secondly, thirdly, fourthly, like somebody tearing the petals from a flower. 'Finally,' he says, and throws the bare stalk into the dust-bin."

The bishop avoided "The Light under the Altar" for nearly a year. It was only when a second book was announced with the winning title of "The Core of Truth in Christianity" that he perceived he must take action. He sat up late one night with a marked copy, a very indignantly marked copy, of the former work that an elderly colonel, a Wombash parishioner, an orthodox Layman of the most virulent type, had sent him. He perceived that he had to deal with a dialectician of exceptional ability, who had concentrated a quite considerable weight of scholarship upon

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the task of explaining away every scrap of spiritual significance in the Eucharist. From Chasters the bishop was driven by reference to the works of Legge and Frazer, and for the first time he began to measure the dimensions and power of the modern criticism of church doctrine and observance. Green tea should have lit his way to refutation; instead it lit up the whole inquiry with a light of melancholy confirmation. Neither by night nor by day could the bishop find a proper method of opening a counter-attack upon Chasters, who was indisputably an intellectually abler man and a very ruthless beast indeed to assail, and meanwhile the demand that action should be taken increased.

The literature of church history and the controversies arising out of doctrinal development became the employment of the bishop's leisure and a commanding preoccupation. He would have liked to discuss with some one else the network of perplexities in which he was entangling himself, and more particularly with Canon Bliss, but his own positions were becoming so insecure that he feared to betray them by argument. He had grown up with a kind of intellectual modesty. Some things he had never yet talked about; it made his mind blench to think of talking about them. And his great aching gaps of wakefulness began now, thanks to the green tea, to be interspersed with theological dreams and visions of an extravagant vividness. He would see Frazer's sacrificial kings butchered picturesquely and terribly amidst strange and grotesque rituals; he would survey long and elaborate processions and ceremonials

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in which the most remarkable symbols were borne high in the sight of all men; he would cower before a gigantic and threatening Heaven. These green-tea dreams and visions were not so much phases of sleep as an intensification and vivid furnishing forth of insomnia. It added greatly to his disturbance that, exceeding the instructions of Brighton-Pomfrey, he had now experimented ignorantly and planlessly with one or two narcotics and sleeping mixtures that friends and acquaintances had mentioned in his hearing. For the first time in his life he became secretive from his wife. He knew he ought not to take these things, he knew they were physically and morally evil, but his torment drove him to them. Subtly and insensibly his character was being undermined by the growing nervous trouble.

He astonished himself by the cunning and the hypocritical dignity he could display in procuring these drugs. He arranged to have a tea-making set in his bedroom, and secretly substituted green tea, for which he developed a powerful craving, in the place of the delicate China tea Lady Ella procured for him.

§ 5

These doctrinal and physical anxieties and distresses were at their worst in the spring and early summer of 1914. That was a time of great mental and moral disturbance. There was premonition in the air of those days. It was like the uneasiness sensitive people experience before a thunder-storm. The moral atmosphere was sullen and close. The whole

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world seemed irritable and mischievous. The suffragettes became extraordinarily malignant; the democratic movement went rotten with sabotage and with a cant of being "rebels"; the reactionary Tories and a crew of noisy old peeresses set themselves to create incurable confusion again in the healing wounds of Ireland, and feuds and frantic folly broke out at every point of the social and political edifice. And then a bomb burst at Sarajevo that silenced all this tumult. The unstable polity of Europe heeled over like a ship that founders.

Through the swiftest, tensest week in history Europe capsized into war.

§ 6

The first effect of the war upon the mind of the bishop, as upon most imaginative minds, was to steady and exalt it. Trivialities and exasperations seemed swept out of existence. Men lifted up their eyes from disputes that had seemed incurable and wrangling that promised to be interminable, and discovered a plain and tragic issue that involved every one in a common call for devotion. For a great number of men and women who had been born and bred in security, the August and September of 1914 were the supremely heroic period of their lives. Myriads of souls were born again to ideas of service and sacrifice in those tremendous days.

Black and evil thing as the war was, it was at any rate a *great* thing; it did this much for countless minds that for the first time they realised the epic quality

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of history and their own relationship to the destinies of the race. The flimsy roof under which we had been living our lives of comedy fell and shattered the floor under our feet; we saw the stars above and the abyss below. We perceived that life was insecure and adventurous, part of one vast adventure in space and time. . . .

Presently the smoke and dust of battle hid the great distances again, but they could not altogether destroy the memories of this revelation.

For the first two months the bishop's attention was so detached from his immediate surroundings and employments, so absorbed by great events, that his history if it were told in detail would differ scarcely at all from the histories of most comparatively unemployed minds during those first dramatic days, the days when the Germans made their great rush upon Paris and it seemed that France was down, France and the whole fabric of liberal civilisation. He emerged from these stunning apprehensions after the Battle of the Marne, to find himself busy upon a score of dispersed and disconnected war jobs, and trying to get all the new appearances and forces and urgencies of the war into relation with himself.

One thing became very vivid indeed, that he wasn't being used in any real and effective way in the war. There was a mighty going to and fro upon Red Cross work and various war committees, a vast preparation for wounded men and for the succour of dislocated families; a preparation, that proved to be needless, for catastrophic unemployment. The war problem and the puzzle of German psychology ousted

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for a time all other intellectual interests; like every one else the bishop swam deep in Nietzsche, Bernhardi, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and the like; he preached several sermons upon German materialism and the astonishing decay of the German character. He also read every newspaper he could lay his hands on—like any secular man. He signed an address to the Russian Orthodox church, beginning “Brethren,” and he revised his impressions of the *Filioque* controversy. The idea of a reunion of the two great state churches of Russia and England had always attracted him. But hitherto it had been a thing quite out of scale, visionary, Utopian. Now in this strange time of altered perspectives it seemed the most practicable of suggestions. The mayor and corporation and a detachment of the special reserve in uniform came to a great intercession service, and in the palace there were two conferences of local influential people, people of the most various types, people who had never met tolerantly before, expressing now opinions of unprecedented breadth and liberality.

All this sort of thing was fresh and exciting at first, and then it began to fall into a routine and became habitual; and as it became habitual he found that old sense of detachment and futility was creeping back again. One day he realised that indeed the whole flood and tumult of the war would be going on almost exactly as it was going on now if there had been neither cathedral nor bishop in Princhester. It came to him that if archbishops were rolled into patriarchs and patriarchs into archbishops, it would

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matter scarcely more in the world process that was afoot than if two men shook hands while their house was afire. At times all of us have inappropriate thoughts. The unfortunate thought that struck the bishop as a bullet might strike a man in an exposed trench, as he was hurrying through the cloisters to a special service and address upon that doubly glorious day in our English history, the day of St. Crispin, was of Diogenes rolling his tub.

It was a poisonous thought.

It arose perhaps out of an article in a weekly paper at which he had glanced after lunch, an article written by one of those sceptical spirits who find all too abundant expression in our periodical literature. The writer boldly charged the "Christian churches" with absolute ineffectiveness. This war, he declared, was above all other wars a war of ideas, of material organisation against rational freedom, of violence against law; it was a war more copiously discussed than any war had ever been before, the air was thick with apologetics. And what was the voice of the church amidst these elemental issues? Bishops and divines who were patriots one heard discordantly enough, but where were the bishops and divines who spoke for the Prince of Peace? Where was the blessing of the church, where was the veto of the church? When it came to that one discovered only a broad preoccupied back busied in supplementing the Army Medical Corps with Red Cross activities, good work in its way—except that the canonicals seemed superfluous. Who indeed looked to the church for any voice at all? And so to Diogenes.

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The bishop's mind went hunting for an answer to that indictment. And came back and came back to the image of Diogenes.

It was with that image dangling like a barbed arrow from his mind that the bishop went into the pulpit to preach upon St. Crispin's day, and looked down upon a thin and scattered congregation in which the elderly, the childless, and the unoccupied predominated. . . .

That night insomnia resumed its sway.

Of course the church ought to be controlling this great storm, the greatest storm of war that had ever stirred mankind. It ought to be standing fearlessly between the combatants like a figure in a wall-painting, with the cross of Christ uplifted and the restored memory of Christendom softening the eyes of the armed nations. "Put down those weapons and listen to me," so the church should speak in irresistible tones, in a voice of silver trumpets. . . .

Instead it kept a long way from the fighting, tucked up its vestments, and was rolling its local tubs quite briskly. . . .

§ 7

And then came the aggravation of all these distresses by an abrupt abandonment of smoking and alcohol. Alcoholic relaxation, a necessary mitigation of the unreality of peace-time politics, becomes a grave danger in war, and it was with an understandable desire to forward the interests of his realm that the king decided to set his statesmen an example—

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which unhappily was not very widely followed—by abstaining from alcohol during the continuance of the struggle. It did however swing over the Bishop of Princhester to an immediate and complete abandonment of both drink and tobacco. At that time he was finding comfort for his nerves in Manila cheroots, and a particularly big and heavy type of Egyptian cigarette with a considerable amount of opium, and his disorganised system seized upon this sudden change as a grievance, and set all his jangling being crying aloud for one cigarette—just one cigarette.

The cheroots, it seemed, he could better spare, but a cigarette became his symbol for his lost steadiness and ease.

It brought him low.

The reader has already been told the lamentable incident of the stolen cigarette and the small boy, and how the bishop, tormented by that shameful memory, cried aloud in the night.

§ 8

The bishop rolled his tub, and is there any tub-rolling in the world more busy and exacting than a bishop's? He rolled it in spite of ill health and insomnia, and all the while he was tormented by the enormous background of the World War, by his ineffective realisation of vast national needs, by his passionate desire, for himself and his church, not to be ineffective. . . .

The distressful alternation between nights of lucid doubt and days of dull acquiescence was resumed

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with an intensification of its contrasts. The brief phase of hope that followed the turn of the fighting upon the Marne, the hope that after all the war would end swiftly, dramatically and justly, and everything be as it had been before—but pleasanter, gave place to a phase that bordered upon despair. The fall of Antwerp and the doubts and uncertainties of the Flanders situation weighed terribly upon the bishop. He was haunted for a time by nightmares of Zeppelins presently raining fire upon London. These visions became Apocalyptic. The Zeppelins came to England with the new year, and with the close of the year came the struggle for Ypres that was so near to being a collapse of the allied defensive. The events, of the early spring, the bloody failure of British generalship at Neuve Chapelle, the naval disaster in the Dardanelles, the sinking of the *Falaba*, the Russian defeat in the Masurian Lakes, all deepened the bishop's impression of the immensity of the nation's difficulties and of his own unhelpfulness. He was ashamed that the church should hold back its curates from enlistment while the French priests were wearing their uniforms in the trenches; the expedition of the Bishop of London to hold open-air services at the front seemed merely to accentuate the tub-rolling. It was rolling the tub just where it was most in the way.

What was wrong? What was wanting?

The Westminster Gazette, *The Spectator*, and several other of the most trusted organs of public opinion were intermittently discussing the same question. Their discussions implied at once the extreme need

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that was felt for religion by all sorts of representative people, and the universal conviction that the church was in some way muddling and masking her revelation. "*What is wrong with the Churches?*" was, for example, the general heading of *The Westminster Gazette's* correspondence.

One day the bishop skimmed a brief incisive utterance by Sir Harry Johnston that pierced to the marrow of his own shrinking convictions. Sir Harry is one of those people who seem to write as well as speak in a quick tenor. "Instead of propounding plainly and without the accreted mythology of Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome, the pure Gospel of Christ . . . they present it overloaded with unbelievable myths (such as, among a thousand others, that Massacre of the Innocents which never took place) . . . bore their listeners by a Tibetan repetition of creeds that have ceased to be credible. . . . Mutually contradictory propositions. . . . Prayers and litanies composed in Byzantine and mediæval times . . . the want of actuality, the curious 'silliness' which has, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem, hung about the exposition of Christianity. . . . But if the bishops continue to fuss about the trappings of religion . . . the maintenance of codes compiled by people who lived sixteen hundred or two thousand five hundred years ago . . . the increasingly educated and practical-minded working classes will *not* come to church, week-day or Sunday."

The bishop held the paper in his hand, and with a mind that he felt to be terribly open, asked himself how true that sharp indictment might be, and,

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granting its general truth, what was the duty of the church, that is to say of the bishops, for as Cyprian says, *ecclesia est in episcopo*. We say the creeds; how far may we unsay them?

So far he had taken no open action against Chasters. Suppose now he were to side with Chasters and let the whole diocese, the church of Princhester, drift as far as it chose under his inaction towards an extreme modernism, risking a conflict with, and if necessary fighting, the archbishop. . . . It was but for a moment that his mind swung to this possibility and then recoiled. The Laymen, that band of bigots, would fight. He could not contemplate litigation and wrangling about the teaching of the church. Besides, what were the "trappings of religion" and what the essentials? What after all was "the pure gospel of Christ" of which this writer wrote so glibly? He put the paper down and took a New Testament from his desk and opened it haphazard. He felt a curious wish that he could read it for the first time. It was overfamiliar. Everything latterly in his theology and beliefs had become overfamiliar. It had all become mechanical and dead and unmeaning to his tired mind. . . .

Whippham came with a reminder of more tub-rolling, and the bishop's speculations were broken off.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

THE SYMPATHY OF LADY SUNDERBUND

§ 1

THAT night when he cried aloud at the memory of his furtive cigarette, the bishop was staying with a rich man named Garstein Fellows. These Garstein Fellows people were steel people with a financial side to them; young Garstein Fellows had his fingers in various chemical businesses, and the real life of the firm was in various minor partners called Hartstein and Blumenhart and so forth, who had acquired a considerable amount of ungentlemanly science and energy in Germany and German Switzerland. But the Fellows element was good old Princhester stuff. There had been a Fellows firm in Princhester in 1819. They were not people the bishop liked and it was not a house the bishop liked staying at, but it had become part of his policy to visit and keep in touch with as many of the local plutocracy as he could, to give and take with them, in order to make the presence of the church a reality to them. It had been not least among the negligences and evasions of the sainted but indolent Hood that he had invariably refused overnight hospitality whenever it was possible for him to get back to his home. The morning was his working time. His books and hymns had profited at the cost of missing many a generous after-dinner subscription, and at the expense of social unity. From the outset Dr. Scrope had set himself to alter this.

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A certain lack of enthusiasm on Lady Ella's part had merely provoked him to greater effort on his own. His ideal of what was needed with the people was something rather jolly and familiar, something like a very good and successful French or Irish priest, something that came easily and readily into their homes and laid a friendly hand on their shoulders. The less his nature responded to these rich people the more familiar his resolution to be successfully intimate made him. He put down the names and brief characteristics of their sons and daughters in a little note-book and consulted it before every visit so as to get his most casual inquiries right. And he invited himself to the Garstein Fellows house on this occasion by telegram.

"A special mission and some business in Wombash may I have a scrap of supper and a bed?"

Now Mrs. Garstein Fellows was a thoroughly London woman; she was one of the banking Grunenbaums, the fair tall sort, and she had a very decided tendency to smartness. She had a little party in the house, a sort of long week-end party, that made her hesitate for a minute or so before she framed a reply to the bishop's request.

It was the intention of Mrs. Garstein Fellows to succeed very conspicuously in the British world, and the British world she felt was a complicated one; it is really not one world but several, and if you would surely succeed you must keep your peace with all the systems and be a source of satisfaction to all of them.

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So at least Mrs. Garstein Fellows saw it, and her method was to classify her acquaintances according to their systems, to keep them in their proper bundles and to give every one the treatment he or she was accustomed to receive. And since all things British are now changing and passing away, it may not be uninteresting to record the classification Mrs. Garstein Fellows adopted. First she set apart as most precious and desirable, and requiring the most careful treatment, the "court dowdies"—for so it was that the dignity and quiet good taste that radiated from Buckingham Palace impressed her restless, shallow mind—the sort of people who prefer pair horse carriages to automobiles, have quiet friendships in the highest quarters, quietly do not know any one else, busy themselves with charities, dress richly rather than impressively, and have either little water-colour accomplishments or none at all, and no other relations with "art." At the skirts of this crowning British world Mrs. Garstein Fellows tugged industriously and expensively. She did not keep a carriage and pair and an old family coachman because that, she felt, would be considered pushing and presumptuous; she had the sense to stick to her common unpretending 80 h.-p. Daimler; but she wore a special sort of blackish hat-bonnet for such occasions as brought her near the centre of honour, which she got from a little good shop known only to very few outside the inner ring, which hat-bonnet she was always careful to sit on for a few minutes before wearing. And it was to this first and highest and best section of her social scheme that she considered that

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bishops properly belonged. But some bishops, and in particular such a comparatively bright bishop as the Bishop of Princhester, she also thought of as being just as comfortably accommodated in her second system, the "serious liberal lot," which was more fatiguing and less boring, which talked of books and things, visited the Bells, went to all first-nights when Granville Barker was the producer, and knew and valued people in the grey and earnest plains between the Cecils and the Sidney Webbs. And thirdly there were the smart intellectual lot, again not very well marked off, and on the whole practicable to bishops, of whom fewer particulars are needed because theirs is a perennial species, and then finally there was that fourth world which was paradoxically at once very brilliant and slightly shady, which had its Night Club side, and seemed to set no limit to its eccentricities. It seemed at times to be aiming to shock and yet it had its standards, but here it was that the dancers and actresses and forgiven divorcees came in—and the bishops as a rule, a rule hitherto always respected, didn't. This was the ultimate world of Mrs. Garstein Fellows; she had no use for merely sporting people and the merely correct smart and the duller county families, sets that led nowhere, and it was from her fourth system of the Glittering Doubtfuls that this party which made her hesitate over the bishop's telegram, was derived.

She ran over their names as she sat considering her reply.

What was there for a bishop to object to? There was that admirable American widow, Lady Sunder-

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bund. She was enormously rich, she was enthusiastic. She was really on probation for higher levels; it was her décolletage delayed her. If only she kept off theosophy and the Keltic renaissance and her disposition to profess wild intellectual passions, there would be no harm in her. Provided she didn't come down to dinner in anything too fantastically scanty—but a word in season was possible. No! there was no harm in Lady Sunderbund. Then there were Ridgeway Kelso and this dark excitable Catholic friend of his, Pádraig O'Gorman. Mrs. Garstein Fellows saw no harm in them. Then one had to consider Lord Gatling and Lizzie Barnsetter. But nothing showed, nothing was likely to show even if there *was* anything. And besides, wasn't there a Church and Stage Guild?

Except for those people there seemed small reason for alarm. Mrs. Garstein Fellows did not know that Professor Hoppart, who so amusingly combined a professorship of political economy with the writing of music-hall lyrics, was a keen amateur theologian, nor that Bent, the sentimental novelist, had a similar passion. She did not know that her own eldest son, a dark, romantic-looking youngster from Eton, had also come to the theological stage of development. She did however weigh the possibilities of too liberal opinions on what are called social questions on the part of Miss Sharsper, the novelist, and decided that if that lady was watched nothing so terrible could be said even in an undertone; and as for the Mariposa, the dancer, she had nothing but Spanish and bad French, she looked all right, and it wasn't very likely

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she would go out of her way to startle an Anglican bishop. Simply she needn't dance. Besides which even if a man does get a glimpse of the broader things in life—it isn't as if it was a woman.

But of course if the party mustn't annoy the bishop, the bishop must do his duty by the party. There must be the usual purple and the silver buckles.

She wired back:

“A little party but it won't put you out send your man with your change.”

§ 2

In making that promise Mrs. Garstein Fellows reckoned without the morbid sensibility of the bishop's disorganised nervous system and the unsuspected theological stirrings beneath the apparent worldliness of Hoppart and Bent.

The trouble began in the drawing-room after dinner. Out of deference to the bishop's abstinence the men did not remain to smoke, but came in to find the Mariposa and Lady Sunderbund smoking cigarettes, which these ladies continued to do rather defiantly. They had hoped to finish them before the bishop came up. The night was chilly, and a cheerful wood-fire cracking and banging on the fireplace emphasised the ordinary heating. Mrs. Garstein Fellows, who had not expected so prompt an appearance of the men, had arranged her chairs in a semicircle for a little womanly gossip, and before she could intervene she found her party, with the exception of

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Lord Gatling, who had drifted just a bit too noticeably with Miss Barnsetter into a window, sitting round with a conscious air, perhaps a trifle too apparent, of being "good."

And Mr. Bent plunged boldly into general conversation.

"Are you reading anything now, Mrs. Garstein Fellows?" he asked. "I'm an interested party."

She was standing at the side of the fireplace. She bit her lip and looked at the cornice and meditated with a girlish expression. "Yes," she said. "I am reading again. I didn't think I should, but I am."

"For a time," said Hoppart, "I read nothing but the papers. I bought from a dozen to twenty a day."

"That is wearing off," said the bishop.

"The first thing I began to read again," said Mrs. Garstein Fellows, "—I'm not saying it for your sake, Bishop—was the Bible."

"I went to the Bible," said Bent as if he was surprised.

"I've heard that before," said Ridgeway Kelso, in that slightly explosive manner of his. "All sorts of people who don't usually read the Bible——"

"But Mr. Kelso!" protested their hostess with raised eyebrows.

"I was thinking of Bent. But anyhow there's been a great wave of seriousness, a sudden turning to religion and religious things. I don't know if it comes your way, Bishop. . . ."

"I've had no rows of penitents yet."

"We may be coming," said Hoppart.

He turned sideways to face the bishop. "I think

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we should be coming if—if it wasn't for old entangled difficulties. I don't know if you will mind my saying it to you, but . . ."

The bishop returned his frank glance. "I'd like to know above all things," he said. "If Mrs. Garstein Fellows will permit us. It's my business to know."

"We *all* want to know," said Lady Sunderbund, speaking from the low chair on the other side of the fireplace. There was a vibration in her voice and a sudden gleam of enthusiasm in her face. "Why shouldn't people talk se'iously sometimes?"

"Well, take my own case," said Hoppart. "In the last few weeks, I've been reading not only in the Bible but in the Fathers. I've read most of Athanasius, most of Eusebius, and—I'll confess it—Gibbon. I find all my old wonder come back. Why are we pinned to—to the amount of creed we are pinned to? Why for instance must you insist on the Trinity?"

"*Yes*," said the Eton boy explosively, and flushed darkly to find he had spoken.

"Here is a time when men ask for God," said Hoppart.

"And you give them three!" cried Bent rather cheaply.

"I confess I find the way encumbered by these Alexandrian elaborations," Hoppart completed.

"*Need* it be?" whispered Lady Sunderbund very softly.

"Well," said the bishop, and leaned back in his armchair and knitted his brow at the fire. "I do not think," he said, "that men coming to God think very much of the nature of God. Nevertheless," he spoke

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slowly and patted the arm of his chair, "nevertheless the church insists that certain vitally important truths have to be conveyed, certain mortal errors are best guarded against, by these symbols."

"You admit they are symbols."

"So the church has always called them."

Hoppart showed by a little movement and grimace that he thought the bishop quibbled.

"In every sense of the word," the bishop hastened to explain, "the creeds are symbolical. It is clear they seek to express ineffable things by at least an extended use of familiar words. I suppose we are all agreed nowadays that when we speak of the Father and of the Son we mean something only in a very remote and exalted way parallel with—with biological fatherhood and sonship."

Lady Sunderbund nodded eagerly. "Yes," she said, "oh yes," and held up an expectant face for more.

"Our utmost words, our most elaborately phrased creeds, can at the best be no better than the shadow of something unseen thrown upon the screen of experience."

He raised his rather weary eyes to Hoppart as if he would know what else needed explanation. He was gratified by Lady Sunderbund's approval, but he affected not to see or hear it. But it was Bent who spoke.

He spoke in the most casual way. He made the thing seem the most incidental of observations.

"What puzzles me," he said, "is why the early Christians identified the *Spermaticos Logos* of the

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Stoics with the second and not with the third person of the Trinity."

To which the bishop, rising artlessly to the bait, replied, "Ah! that indeed *is* the unfortunate aspect of the whole affair."

And then the Irish Catholic came down on him. . . .

§ 3

How the bishop awakened in the night after this dispute has been told already in the opening section of this story. To that night of discomfort we now return after this comprehensive digression. He awoke from nightmares of eyes and triangles to bottomless remorse and perplexity. For the first time he fully measured the vast distances he had travelled from the beliefs and attitudes of his early training, since his coming to Princhester. Travelled—or rather slipped and fallen down the long slopes of doubt. . . .

That clear inky dimness that comes before dawn found his white face at the window looking out upon the great terrace and the park.

§ 4

After a bout of mental distress and sleeplessness the bishop would sometimes awaken in the morning not so much exhausted as in a state of thin mental and bodily activity. This was more particularly so if the night had produced anything in the nature of a purpose. So it was on this occasion. The day was clear before him; at least it could be cleared by send-

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ing three telegrams; his man could go back to Princhester and so leave him perfectly free to go to Brighton-Pomfrey in London and secure that friendly dispensation to smoke again which seemed the only alternative to a serious mental breakdown. He would take his bag, stay the night in London, smoke, sleep well, and return the next morning. Dunk, his valet-butler, found him already bathed and ready for a cup of tea and a Bradshaw at half past seven. He went on dressing although the good train for London did not start until 10.45.

Mrs. Garstein Fellows was by nature and principle a late riser; the breakfast-room showed small promise yet of the repast, though the table was set and bright with silver and fresh flowers, and a wood-fire popped and spurted to greet and encourage the March sunshine. But standing in the doorway that led to the promise and daffodils and crocuses of Mrs. Garstein Fellows' garden stood Lady Sunderbund, almost with an effect of waiting, and she greeted the bishop very cheerfully, doubted the immediate appearance of any one else, and led him in the most natural manner into the new but already very pleasant shrubbery.

In some indefinable special way the bishop had been aware of Lady Sunderbund's presence since first he had met her, but it was only now that he could observe her with any particularity. She was tall like his own Lady Ella but not calm and quiet; she was electric; her eyes, her smiles, her complexion had as it were an established brightness that exceeded the common lustre of things. This morning she was

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dressed in grey that was nevertheless not grey but had an effect of colour, and there was a thread of black along the lines of her body and a gleam of gold. She carried her head back with less dignity than pride; there was a frozen movement in her dark hair as if it flamed up out of her head. There were silver ornaments in her hair. She spoke with a pretty little weakness of the r's that had probably been acquired abroad. And she lost no time in telling him, she was eager to tell him, that she had been way-laying him. "I did so want to talk to you some maw," she said. "I was shy last night and they we' all so noisy and eaga'. I p'ayed that you might come down early.

"It's an oppo'tunity I've *longed* for," she said.

She did her very pretty best to convey what it was had been troubling her. 'iligion had been worrying her for years. Life was—oh—just ornaments and games and so wea'isome, so *wea'isome*, unless it was 'iligious. And she couldn't *get* it 'iligious.

The bishop nodded his head gravely.

"You unde'stand?" she pressed.

"I understand too well—the attempt to get hold—and keep hold."

"I knew you would!" she cried.

She went on with an impulsive rapidity. O'thodoxy had always 'ipelled her,—always. She had felt herself confronted by the most insurmountable difficulties, and yet whenever she had gone away from Christianity—she *had* gone away from Christianity, to the Theosophists and the Christian Scientists—she had felt she was only "st'aying fu'tha." And then

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suddenly when he was speaking last night, she had felt he *knew*. It was so wonderful to hear the "k'eed was only a symbol."

"Symbol is the proper name for it," said the bishop. "It was called the Creed, much later."

Yes; and so what it really meant was something quite different from what it *did* mean. . . .

The bishop felt that this sentence also was only a symbol, and nodded encouragingly—but gravely, warily.

And there she was, and the point was there were thousands and thousands and thousands of educated people like her who were *dying* to get through these old-fashioned symbols to the true faith that lay behind them. That they *knew* lay behind them. She didn't know if he had read "The Light under the Altar"?

"He's vicar of Wombash—in my diocese," said the bishop with restraint.

"It's wonde'ful stuff," said Lady Sunderbund. "It's spi'tually cold, but it's intellectually wonde'ful. But we want that with spi'tuality. We want it so badly. If some one——"

She became daring. She bit her under lip and flashed her spirit at him.

"If *you*—" she said and paused.

"Could think aloud," said the bishop.

"Yes," she said, nodding rapidly, and became breathless to hear.

It would certainly be an astonishing end to the Chasters difficulty if the bishop went over to the heretic, the bishop reflected.

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"My dear lady, I won't disguise," he began; "in fact I don't see how I could, that for some years I have been growing more and more discontented with some of our most fundamental formulæ. But it's been very largely a shapeless discontent—hitherto. I don't think I've said a word to a single soul. No, not a word. You are the first person to whom I've ever made the admission that even my feelings are at times unorthodox."

She lit up marvellously at his words. "Go on," she whispered.

But she did not need to tell him to go on. Now that he had once broached the casket of his reserves he was only too glad of a listener. He talked as if they were intimate and loving friends, and so it seemed to both of them they were. It was a wonderful release from a long and painful solitude.

To certain types it is never quite clear what has happened to them until they tell it. So that now the bishop, punctuated very prettily by Lady Sunderbund, began to measure for the first time the extent of his departure from the old innate convictions of Otteringham Rectory. He said that it was strange to find doubt coming so late in life, but perhaps it was only in recent years that his faith had been put to any really severe tests. It had been sheltered and unchallenged.

"This fearful wa'," Lady Sunderbund interjected.

But Princhester had been a critical and trying change, and "The Light under the Altar" case had ploughed him deeply. It was curious that his doubts always seemed to have a double strand; there was a

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moral objection based on the church's practical futility and an intellectual strand subordinated to this which traced that futility largely to its unconvincing formulæ.

"And yet you know," said the bishop, "I find I can't go with Chasters. He *beats* at the church; he treats her as though she were wrong. I feel like a son, growing up, who finds his mother isn't quite so clear-spoken nor quite so energetic as she seemed to be once. She's *right*, I feel sure. I've never doubted her fundamental goodness."

"Yes," said Lady Sunderbund, very eagerly, "*yes*."

"And yet there's this futility. . . . You know, my dear lady, I don't know what to do. One feels on the one hand, that here is a cloud of witnesses, great men, sainted men, subtle men, figures permanently historical, before whom one can do nothing but bow down in the utmost humility, here is a great instrument and organisation—what would the world be without the witness of the church?—and on the other hand here are our masses out of hand and hostile, our industrial leaders equally hostile; there is a failure to grip, and that failure to grip is so clearly traceable to the fact that our ideas are not modern ideas, that when we come to profess our faith we find nothing in our mouths but antiquated Alexandrian subtleties and phrases and ideas that may have been quite alive, quite significant, quite adequate in Asia Minor or Egypt, among men essentially orientals, fifteen hundred years ago, but which now——"

He expressed just what they came to now by a gesture.

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She echoed his gesture.

"Probably I'm not alone among my brethren," he went on, and then: "But what is one to do?"

With her hands she acted her sense of his difficulty.

"One may be precipitate," he said. "There's a kind of loyalty and discipline that requires one to keep the ranks until one's course of action is perfectly clear. . . . One owes so much to so many. One has to consider how one may affect—oh! people one has never seen."

He was now lugging into speech things that so far had been scarcely above the threshold of his conscious thought. He went on to discuss the entire position of the disbelieving cleric. He discovered a fine point.

"If there was something else, an alternative, another religion, another Church, to which one could go, the whole case would be different. But to go from the church to nothingness isn't to go from falsehood to truth. It's to go from truth rather badly expressed, rather conservatively hidden by its protections, truth in an antiquated costume, to the blackest lie—in the world."

She took that point very brightly.

"One must hold fast to 'iligion," she said, and looked earnestly at him and gripped fiercely, pink thumbs out, with her beautiful hands held up.

That was it, exactly. He too was gripping. But while on the outside the Midianites of denial were prowling for these clinging souls, within the camp they were assailed by a meticulous orthodoxy that was only too eager to cast them forth. The bishop

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dwelt for a time upon the curious fierceness orthodoxy would sometimes display. Nowadays atheism can be civil, can be generous; it is orthodoxy that trails a scurrilous fringe.

"Who was that young man with a strong Irish accent—who contradicted me so suddenly?" he asked.

"The dark young man?"

"The noisy young man."

"That was Mist' Pat'ick O'Go'man. He is a Kelt and all that. Spells Pat'ick with eva so many letters. *You* know. They say he spends ouas and ouas lea'n-ing E'se. He wo'ies about it. They all t'y to lea'n E'se, and it wo'ies them and makes them hate Eng-land moa and moa."

"He is orthodox. He—is what I call orthodox to the ridiculous extent."

"'idiculous."

A deep-toned gong proclaimed breakfast over a square mile or so of territory, and Lady Sunderbund turned about mechanically towards the house. But they continued their discussion.

She started indeed a new topic. "Shall we eva, do 'ou think, have a *new* 'iligion—t'ua and betta?"

That was a revolutionary idea to him.

He was still fending it off from him when a gap in the shrubs brought them within sight of the house and of Mrs. Garstein Fellows on the portico waving a handkerchief and crying "*Break-fast.*"

"I wish we could talk for houas," said Lady Sunderbund.

"I've been glad of this talk," said the bishop. "*Very* glad."

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She lifted her soft abundant skirts and trotted briskly across the still dewy lawn towards the house door. The bishop followed gravely and slowly with his hands behind his back and an unusually peaceful expression upon his face. He was thinking how rare and precious a thing it is to find intelligent friendship in women. More particularly when they were daz- zlingly charming and pretty. It was strange, but this was really his first woman friend. If, as he hoped, she became his friend. . . .

Lady Sunderbund entered the breakfast-room in a gusty abundance like Botticelli's Primavera, and kissed Mrs. Garstein Fellows good morning. She ex- haled a glowing happiness. "He is wondyful," she panted. "He is most wondyful."

"Mr. Ridgeway Kelso?"

"No, the dee' bishop! I *love* him. Are those the little sausages I like? May I take th'ee? I've been up houas."

The dee' bishop appeared in the sunlit doorway.

§ 5

The bishop felt more contentment in the London train than he had felt for many weeks. He had taken two decisive and relieving steps. One was that he had stated his case to another human being, and that a very charming and sympathetic human being, he was no longer a prey to a current of secret and con- cealed thoughts running counter to all the appear- ances of his outward life; and the other was that he

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was now within an hour or so of Brighton-Pomfrey and a cigarette. He would lunch on the train, get to London about two, take a taxi at once to the wise old doctor, catch him over his coffee in a charitable and understanding mood, and perhaps be smoking a cigarette publicly and honourably and altogether satisfyingly before three.

So far as Brighton-Pomfrey's door this programme was fulfilled without a hitch. The day was fine and he had his taxi opened, and noted with a patriotic satisfaction as he rattled through the streets, the glare of the recruiting posters on every vacant piece of wall and the increasing number of men in khaki in the streets. But at the door he had a disappointment. Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey was away at the front—of all places; he had gone for some weeks; would the bishop like to see Dr. Dale?

The bishop hesitated. He had never set eyes on this Dr. Dale.

Indeed, he had never heard of Dr. Dale.

Seeing his old friend Brighton-Pomfrey and being gently and tactfully told to do exactly what he was longing to do was one thing; facing some strange doctor and going slowly and elaborately through the whole story of his illness, his vow, and his breakdown, and perhaps having his reaction times tested and all sorts of stripping and soundings done, was quite another. He was within an ace of turning away.

If he had turned away his whole subsequent life would have been different. It was the very slightest thing in the world tipped the beam. It was the

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thought that, after all, whatever inconvenience and unpleasantness there might be in this interview, there was at the end of it a very reasonable prospect of a restored and legitimate cigarette.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE FIRST VISION

§ 1

DR. DALE exceeded the bishop's worst apprehensions.

He was a lean, lank, dark young man with long black hair and irregular, rather prolonged features; his chin was right over to the left; he looked constantly at the bishop's face with a sceptical grey eye; he could not have looked harder if he had been a photographer or a portrait-painter. And his voice was harsh, and the bishop was particularly sensitive to voices.

He began by understanding far too much of the bishop's illness, and he insisted on various familiarities with the bishop's heart and tongue and eye and knee that ruffled the bishop's soul.

"Brighton-Pomfrey talked of neurasthenia?" he asked.

"That was his diagnosis," said the bishop.

"Neurasthenia," said the young man as though he despised the word.

The bishop went on buttoning up his coat.

"You don't of course want to break your vows about drinking and smoking," said the young man with the very faintest suggestion of derision in his voice.

"Not if it can possibly be avoided," the bishop

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asserted. "Without a loss, that is, of practical efficiency," he added. "For I have much to do."

"I think that it is possible to keep your vow," said the young man, and the bishop could have sworn at him. "I think we can manage that all right."

§ 2

The bishop sat at the table resting his arm upon it and awaiting the next development of this unsatisfactory interview. He was on the verge of asking as unpleasantly as possible when Brighton-Pomfrey would return.

The young man stood upon Brighton-Pomfrey's hearth-rug, and was evidently contemplating dissertations.

"Of course," he said, as though he discussed a problem with himself, "you must have some sort of comfort. You must get out of this state, one way or another."

The bishop nodded assent. He had faint hopes of this young man's ideas of comfort.

Dr. Dale reflected. Then he went off away from the question of comfort altogether. "You see, the trouble in such a case as this is peculiarly difficult to trace to its sources because it comes just upon the border-line of bodily and mental things. You may take a drug or alter your regimen and it disturbs your thoughts, you may take an idea and it disturbs your health. It is easy enough to say, as some do, that all ideas have a physical substratum; it is almost as easy to say with the Christian Scientist that

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all bodily states are amenable to our ideas. The truth doesn't, I think, follow the border between those opposite opinions very exactly on either side. I can't, for instance, tell you to go home and pray against these uncertainties and despairs, because it is just these uncertainties and despairs that rob you of the power of efficient prayer."

He did not seem to expect anything from the bishop.

"I don't see that because a case brings one suddenly right up against the frontier of metaphysics, why a doctor should necessarily pull up short at that, why one shouldn't go on into either metaphysics or psychology if such an extension is necessary for the understanding of the case. At any rate if you'll permit it in this consultation. . . ."

"Go on," said the bishop, holding on to that promise of comfort. "The best thing is to thrash out the case in your own way. And then come to what is practical."

"What is really the matter here—the matter with *you* that is—is a disorganisation of your tests of reality. It's one of a group of states hitherto confused. Neurasthenia, that comprehensive phrase—well, it is one of the neurasthenias. Here, I confess, I begin to talk of work I am doing, work still to be published, finished first and then published. . . . But I go off from the idea that every living being lives in a state not differing essentially from a state of hallucination concerning the things about it. Truth, essential truth, is hidden. Always. Of course there must be a measure of truth in our working illusions, a working

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measure of truth, or the creature would smash itself up and end itself, but beyond that discretion of the fire and the pitfall lies a wide margin of error about which we may be deceived for years. So long as it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. I don't know if I make myself clear."

"I follow you," said the bishop a little wearily, "I follow you. Phenomena and noumena and so on and so on. Kant and so forth. Pragmatism. Yes."

With a sigh.

"And all that," completed Dr. Dale in a voice that suggested mockery. "But you see we grow into a way of life, we settle down among habits and conventions, we say 'This is all right' and 'That is always so.' We get more and more settled into our life as a whole and more and more confident. Unless something happens to shake us out of our sphere of illusion. That may be some violent contradictory fact, some accident, or it may be some subtle change in one's health and nerves that makes us feel *doubtful*. Or a change of habits. Or, as I believe, some subtle quickening of the critical faculty. Then suddenly comes the feeling as though we were lost in a strange world, as though we had never really *seen* the world before."

He paused.

The bishop was reluctantly interested. "That does describe something—of the mental side," he admitted.

"I never believe in concealing my own thoughts from an intelligent patient," said Dr. Dale, with a quiet offensiveness. "That sort of thing belongs to the dark ages of the 'pothecary's art. I will tell you

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exactly my guesses and suppositions about you. At the base of it all is a slight kidney derangement due I suggest to your going to Princhester and drinking the local water——”

“But it’s excellent water. They boast of it.”

“By all the established tests. As a matter of fact many of our best drinking-waters have all sorts of unspecified qualities. Burton water, for example, is radioactive by Beetham’s standards up to the ninth degree. But that is by the way. My theory about your case is that this produced a change in your blood that quickened your sensibilities and your critical faculties just at a time when a good many bothers—I don’t of course know what they were, but I can, so to speak, see the marks all over you—came into your life.”

The bishop nodded.

“You were uprooted. You moved from house to house, and failed to get that curled-up *safe* feeling one has in a *real* home in any of them.”

“If you saw the fireplaces and the general decoration of the new palace!” admitted the bishop. “I had practically *no* control.”

“That confirms me,” said Dr. Dale. “Insomnia followed, and increased the feeling of physical strangeness by increasing the bodily disturbance. I suspect an intellectual disturbance.”

He paused.

“There was,” said the bishop.

“You were no longer at home anywhere. You were no longer at home in your diocese, in your palace, in your body, in your convictions. And then

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came the war. Quite apart from everything else the mind of the whole world is suffering profoundly from the shock of this war—much more than is generally admitted. One thing you did that you probably did not observe yourself doing, you drank rather more at your meals, you smoked a lot more. That was your natural and proper response to the shock.”

“Ah!” said the bishop, and brightened up.

“It was remarked by Tolstoy, I think, that few intellectual men would really tolerate the world as it is if it were not for smoking and drinking. Even novelists have their moments of lucidity. Certainly these things soothe the restlessness in men’s minds, deaden their sceptical sensibilities. And just at the time when you were getting most dislodged—you gave them up.”

“And the sooner I go back to them the better,” said the bishop brightly. “I quite see that.”

“I wouldn’t say that,” said Dr. Dale. . . .

§ 3

“That,” said Dr. Dale, “is just where my treatment of this case differs from the treatment of”—he spoke the name reluctantly as if he disliked the mere sound of it—“Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey.”

“Hitherto, of course,” said the bishop, “I’ve been in his hands.”

“He,” said Dr. Dale, “would certainly set about trying to restore your old sphere of illusion, your old familiar sensations and ideas and confidences. He would in fact turn you back. He would restore all

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your habits. He would order you a rest. He would send you off to some holiday resort, fresh in fact but familiar in character, the Highlands, North Italy, or Switzerland for example. He would forbid you newspapers and order you to botanise and prescribe tranquillising reading; Trollope's novels, the Life of Gladstone, the works of Mr. A. C. Benson, memoirs and so on. You'd go somewhere where there was a good Anglican chaplain, and you'd take some of the services yourself. And we'd wash out the effects of the Princhester water with Contrexeville, and afterwards put you on Salutaris or Perrier. I don't know whether *I* shouldn't have inclined to some such treatment before the war began. Only——"

He paused.

"You think——?"

Dr. Dale's face betrayed a sudden sombre passion. "*It won't do now,*" he said in a voice of quiet intensity. "*It won't do now.*"

He remained darkly silent for so long that at last the bishop spoke. "Then what," he asked, "do you suggest?"

"Suppose we don't try to go back," said Dr. Dale. "Suppose we go on and go through."

"Where?"

"*To reality.*"

"I know it's doubtful, I know it's dangerous," he went on, "but I am convinced that now we can no longer keep men's minds and souls in these feathered nests, these spheres of illusion. Behind these veils there is either God or the Darkness. . . . Why should we not go on?"

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The bishop was profoundly perplexed. He heard himself speaking. "It would be unworthy of my cloth——" he was saying.

Dr. Dale completed the sentence: "to go back.

"Let me explain a little more," he said, "what I mean by 'going on.' I think that this loosening of the ties of association that bind a man to his every-day life and his every-day self is in nine cases out of ten a loosening of the ties that bind him to every-day sanity. One common form of this detachment is the form you have in those cases of people who are found wandering unaware of their names, unaware of their places of residence, lost altogether from themselves. They have not only lost their sense of identity with themselves, but all the circumstances of their lives have faded out of their minds like an idle story in a book that has been read and put aside. I have looked into hundreds of such cases. I don't think that loss of identity is a necessary thing; it's just another side of the general weakening of the grip upon reality, a kind of anæmia of the brain so that interest fades and fails. There is no reason why you should forget a story because you do not believe it—if your brain is strong enough to hold it. But if your brain is tired and weak, then so soon as you lose faith in your records, your mind is glad to let them go. When you see these lost identity people that is always your first impression, a tired brain that has let go."

The bishop felt extremely like letting go.

"But how does this apply to my case?"

"I come to that," said Dr. Dale, holding up a long large hand. "What if we treat this case of yours in a

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new way? What if we give you not narcotics but stimulants and tonics? What if we so touch the blood that we increase your sense of physical detachment while at the same time feeding up your senses to a new and more vivid apprehension of things about you?" He looked at his patient's hesitation and added: "You'd lose all that *craving* feeling, that you fancy at present is just the need of a smoke. The world might grow a trifle—transparent, but you'd keep real. Instead of drugging oneself back to the old contentment——"

"You'd drug me on to the new," said the bishop.

"But just one word more!" said Dr. Dale. "Hear why I would do this! It was easy and successful to rest and drug people back to their old states of mind when the world wasn't changing, wasn't spinning round in the wildest tornado of change that it has ever been in. But now— *Where* can I send you for a rest? Where can I send you to get you out of sight and hearing of the Catastrophe? Of course old Brighton-Pomfrey would go on sending people away for rest and a nice little soothing change if the Day of Judgment was coming in the sky and the earth was opening and the sea was giving up its dead. He'd send 'em to the seaside. Such things as that wouldn't shake his faith in the channel crossing. My idea is that it's not only right for you to go through with this, but that it's the only thing to do. If you go right on and right through with these doubts and intimations——"

He paused

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"You may die like a madman," he said, "but you won't die like a tame rabbit."

§ 4

The bishop sat reflecting. What fascinated and attracted him was the ending of all the cravings and uneasinesses and restlessness that had distressed his life now for over four years; what deterred him was the personality of this gaunt young man with his long grey face, his excited manner, his shock of black hair. He wanted that tonic—with grave misgivings.

"If you think this tonic is the wiser course," he began.

"I'd give it you if you were my father," said Dr. Dale.

"I've got everything for it," he added.

"You mean you can make it up—without a prescription."

"I can't give you a prescription. The essence of it— It's a distillate I have been trying. It isn't in the Pharmacopœia."

Again the bishop had a twinge of misgiving.

But in the end he succumbed. He didn't want to take the stuff, but also he did not want to go without his promised comfort.

Presently Dale had given him a little phial—and was holding up to the window a small medicine-glass into which he was pouring very carefully twenty drops of the precious fluid. "Take it only," he said, "when you feel you must."

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"It is the most golden of liquids," said the bishop peering at it.

"When you want more I will make you more. Later of course, it will be possible to write a prescription. Now add the water—*so*."

"It becomes opalescent. How beautifully the light plays in it!"

"Take it."

The bishop dismissed his last discretion and drank.

"Well?" said Dr. Dale.

"I am still here," said the bishop smiling, and feeling a joyous tingling throughout his body. "It stirs me."

§ 5

The bishop stood on the pavement outside Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey's house. The massive door had closed behind him.

It had been an act of courage, of rashness if you will, to take this draught. He was acutely introspective, ready for anything, for the most disagreeable or the most bizarre sensations. He was asking himself, Were his feet steady? Was his head swimming?

His doubts glowed into assurance.

Suddenly he perceived that he was sure of God.

Not perhaps of the God of Nicæa, but what did these poor little quibblings and definitions of the theologians matter? He had been worrying about these definitions and quibblings for four long restless years. Now they were just failures to express—what surely every one knew—and no one would ever express

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exactly. Because here was God, and the kingdom of God was manifestly at hand. The visible world hung before him as a mist might hang before the rising sun. He stood proudly and masterfully facing a universe that had heretofore bullied him into doubt and apologetics, a universe that had hitherto been opaque and was now betrayed translucent. . . .

That was the first effect of the new tonic, complete reassurance, complete courage. He turned to walk towards Mount Street and Berkeley Square as a sultan might turn to walk among his slaves.

But the tonic was only beginning.

Before he had gone a dozen steps he was aware that he seemed more solid and larger than the people about him. They had all a curious miniature effect, as though he was looking at them through the wrong end of an opera-glass. The traffic and the houses on either side of the street shared this quality in an equal measure. It was as if he was looking at the world through apertures in a miniature cinematograph peep-show. This surprised him and a little dashed his first glow of satisfaction.

He passed a man in khaki who, he fancied, looked at him with an odd expression. He observed the next passers-by narrowly and suspiciously, a couple of smartish young men, a lady with a poodle, a grocer's boy with a basket, but none seemed to observe anything remarkable about him. Then he caught the eye of a taxi-driver and became doubtful again.

He had a feeling that this tonic was still coming in like a tide. It seemed to be filling him and distending him, in spite of the fact that he was already full.

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After four years of flaccidity it was pleasant to be distended again, but already he felt more filled than he had ever been before. At present nothing was *showing*, but all his body seemed braced and uplifted. He must be careful not to become inflated in his bearing.

And yet it was difficult not to betray a slight inflation. He was so filled with assurance that things were right with him and that God was there with him. After all it was not mere fancy; he *was* looking through the peep-holes of his eyes at the world of illusion and appearance. The world that was so intent upon its immediate business, so regardless of eternal things, that had so dominated him but a little while ago, was after all a thing more mortal than himself.

Another man in khaki passed him.

For the first time he saw the war as something measurable, as something with a beginning and an end, as something less than the immortal spirit in man. He had been too much oppressed by it. He perceived all these people in the street were too much oppressed by it. He wanted to tell them as much, tell them that all was well with them, bid them be of good cheer. He wanted to bless them. He found his arm floating up towards gestures of benediction. Self-control became increasingly difficult.

All the way down Berkeley Square the bishop was in full-bodied struggle with himself. He was trying to control himself, trying to keep within bounds. He felt that he was stepping too high, that his feet were not properly reaching the ground, that he was walking upon cushions of air.

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The feeling of largeness increased, and the feeling of transparency in things about him. He avoided collision with passers-by—excessively. And he felt his attention was being drawn more and more to something that was going on beyond the veil of visible things. He was in Piccadilly now, but at the same time Piccadilly was very small and he was walking in the presence of God.

He had a feeling that God was there though he could not see him. And at the same time he was in this transitory world, with people going to and fro, men with umbrellas tucked dangerously under their arms, men in a hurry, policemen, young women rattling Red Cross collecting-boxes, smart people, loafers. They distracted one from God.

He set out to cross the road just opposite Prince's, and jumping needlessly to give way to an omnibus had the narrowest escape from a taxicab.

He paused on the pavement edge to recover himself. The shock of his near escape had, as people say, pulled him together.

What was he to do? Manifestly this opalescent draught was overpowering him. He ought never to have taken it. He ought to have listened to the voice of his misgivings. It was clear that he was not in a fit state to walk about the streets. He was—what had been Dr. Dale's term?—losing his sense of reality. What was he to do? He was alarmed but not dismayed. His thoughts were as full-bodied as the rest of his being, they came throbbing and bumping into his mind. What was he to do?

Brighton-Pomfrey ought never to have left his

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practice in the hands of this wild-eyed experimenter.

Strange that after a lifetime of discretion and men's respect one should be standing on the Piccadilly pavement—*intoxicated!*

It came into his head that he was not so very far from the Athenæum, and surely there if anywhere a bishop may recover his sense of being—ordinary.

And behind everything, behind the tall buildings and the swarming people there was still the sense of a wide illuminated space, of a light of wonder and a Presence. But he must not give way to that again! He had already given way altogether too much. He repeated to himself in a whisper, "I am in Piccadilly."

If he kept tight hold upon himself he felt he might get to the Athenæum before—before anything more happened.

He murmured directions to himself. "Keep along the pavement. Turn to the right at the Circus. Now down the hill. Easily down the hill. Don't float! Junior Army and Navy Stores. And the bookseller."

And presently he had a doubt of his name and began to repeat it.

"Edward Princhester. Edward Scrope, Lord Bishop of Princhester."

And all the while voices within him were asserting, "You are in the kingdom of Heaven. You are in the presence of God. Place and time are a texture of illusion and dreamland. Even now, you are with God."

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§ 6

The porter of the Athenæum saw him come in, looking well—flushed indeed—but queer in expression; his blue eyes were wide open and unusually vague and blue.

He wandered across towards the dining-room, hesitated, went to look at the news, seemed in doubt whether he would go into the smoking-room, and then went very slowly up-stairs, past the golden angel up to the great drawing-room.

In the drawing-room he found only Sir James Mounce, the man who knew the novels of Sir Walter Scott by heart and had the minutest and most unsparing knowledge of every detail in the life of that supreme giant of English literature. He had even, it was said, acquired a Scotch burr in the enthusiasm of his hero-worship. It was usually sufficient only to turn an ear towards him for him to talk for an hour or so. He was now studying Bradshaw.

The bishop snatched at him desperately. He felt that if he went away there would be no hold left upon the ordinary things of life.

“Sir James,” he said, “I was wondering the other day when was the exact date of the earliest public adscription of ‘Waverley’ to Scott.”

“Eh!” said Sir James, “but I’d like to talk that over with ye. Indeed I would. It would be depending very largely on what ye called ‘*public*.’ But——”

He explained something about an engagement in Birmingham that night, a train to catch. Reluctantly but relentlessly he abandoned the proffered ear. But

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he promised that the next time they met in the club he would go into the matter "exhaustevely."

The door closed upon him. The bishop was alone. He was flooded with the light of the world that is beyond this world. The things about him became very small and indistinct.

He would take himself into a quiet corner in the library of this doll's house, and sit his body down in one of the miniature armchairs. Then if he was going to faint or if the trancelike feeling was to become altogether a trance—well, a bishop asleep in an armchair in the library of the Athenæum is nothing to startle any one.

He thought of that convenient hidden room, the North Library, in which is the bust of Croker. There often one can be quite alone. . . . It was empty, and he went across to the window that looks out upon Pall Mall and sat down in the small uncomfortable easy chair by the desk with its back to the Benvenuto Cellini.

And as he sat down, something snapped—like the snapping of a lute string—in his brain.

§ 7

With a sigh of deep relief the bishop realised that this world had vanished.

He was in a golden light.

He perceived it as a place, but it was a place without buildings or trees or any very definite features. There was a cloudy suggestion of distant hills, and beneath his feet were little gem-like flowers, and a

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feeling of divinity and infinite friendliness pervaded his being. His impressions grew more definite. His feet seemed to be bare. He was no longer a bishop nor clad as a bishop. That had gone with the rest of the world. He was seated on a slab of starry rock.

This he knew quite clearly was the place of God.

He was unable to disentangle thoughts from words. He seemed to be speaking in his mind.

"I have been very foolish and confused and perplexed. I have been like a creature caught among thorns."

"You served the purpose of God among those thorns."

It seemed to him at first that the answer also was among his thoughts.

"I seemed so silly and so little. My wits were clay."

"Clay full of desires."

"Such desires!"

"Blind desires. That will presently come to the light."

"Shall we come to the light?"

"But here it is, and you see it!"

§ 8

It became clearer in the mind of the bishop that a figure sat beside him, a figure of great strength and beauty, with a smiling face and kindly eyes. A strange thought and a strange courage came to the bishop.

"Tell me," he whispered, "*are you God?*"

"I am the Angel of God."

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The bishop thought over that for some moments.

"I want," he said, "to know about God.

"I want," he said, with a deepening passion of the soul, "to know about God. Slowly through four long years I have been awakening to the need of God. Body and soul I am sick for the want of God and the knowledge of God. I did not know what was the matter with me, why my life had become so disordered and confused that my very appetites and habits are all astray. But I am perishing for God as a waterless man upon a raft perishes for drink, and there is nothing but madness if I touch the seas about me. Not only in my thoughts but in my under thoughts and in my nerves and bones and arteries I have need of God. You see I grew up in the delusion that I knew God, I did not know that I was unprovisioned and unprovided against the tests and strains and hardships of life. I thought that I was secure and safe. I was told that we men—who were apes not a quarter of a million years ago, who still have hair upon our arms and apes' teeth in our jaws—had come to the full and perfect knowledge of God. It was all put into a creed. Not a word of it was to be altered, not a sentence was to be doubted any more. They made me a teacher of this creed. They seemed to explain it to me. And when I came to look into it, when my need came and I turned to my creed, it was old and shrivelled up, it was the patched-up speculations of vanished Greeks and Egyptians, it was a mummy of ancient disputes, old and dry, that fell to dust as I unwrapped it. And I was dressed up in the dress of old dead times and put before an altar

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of forgotten sacrifices, and I went through ceremonies as old as the first seed-time; and suddenly I knew clearly that God was not there, God was not in my Creed, not in my cathedral, not in my ceremonies, nowhere in my life. And at the same time I knew, I knew as I had never known before, that certainly there was God."

He paused. "Tell me," said the friend at his side; "tell me."

"It was as if a child running beside its mother looked up and saw that he had never seen her face before, that she was not his mother, and that the words he had seemed to understand were—now that he listened—words in an unknown tongue.

"You see, I am but a common sort of man, dear God; I have neither lived nor thought in any way greatly, I have gone from one day to the next day without looking very much farther than the end of the day, I have gone on as life has befallen; if no great trouble had come into my life, so I should have lived to the end of my days. But life which began for me easily and safely has become constantly more difficult and strange. I could have held my services and given my benedictions, I could have believed I believed in what I thought I believed. . . . But now I am lost and astray—crying out for God. . . ."

§ 9

"Let us talk a little about your troubles," said the Angel. "Let us talk about God and this creed that worries you and this church of yours."

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"I feel as though I had been struggling to this talk through all the years—since my doubts began."

"The story your creed is trying to tell is much the same story that all religions try to tell. In your heart there is God, beyond the stars there is God. Is it the same God?"

"I don't know," said the bishop.

"Does any one know?"

"I thought I knew."

"Your creed is full of Levantine phrases and images, full of the patched contradictions of the human intelligence utterly puzzled. It is about those two Gods, the God beyond the stars and the God in your heart. It says that they are the same God, but different. It says that they have existed together for all time, and that one is the Son of the other. It has added a third Person—but we won't go into that."

The bishop was reminded suddenly of the dispute at Mrs. Garstein Fellows'. "We won't go into that," he agreed. "*No!*"

"Other religions have told the story in a different way. The Cathars and Gnostics did. They said that the God in your heart is a rebel against the God beyond the stars, that the Christ in your heart is like Prometheus—or Hiawatha—or any other of the sacrificial gods, a rebel. He arises out of man. He rebels against that high God of the stars and crystals and poisons and monsters and of the dead emptiness of space. . . . The Manicheans and the Persians made out our God to be fighting eternally against that Being of silence and darkness beyond the stars. The Buddhists made the Lord Buddha the leader of men

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out of the futility and confusion of material existence to the great peace beyond. But it is all one story really, the story of the two essential Beings, always the same story and the same perplexity cropping up under different names, the story of one being who stirs us, calls to us, and leads us, and of another who is above and outside and in and beneath all things, inaccessible and incomprehensible. All these religions are trying to tell something they do not clearly know—of a relationship between these two that eludes them, that eludes the human mind, as water escapes from the hand. It is unity and opposition they have to declare at the same time; it is agreement and propitiation, it is infinity and effort.”

“*And the truth?*” said the bishop in an eager whisper. “You can tell me the truth.”

The Angel’s answer was a gross familiarity. He thrust his hand through the bishop’s hair and ruffled it affectionately, and rested for a moment holding the bishop’s cranium in his great palm.

“But can *this* hold it?” he said. . . .

“Not with this little box of brains,” said the Angel. “You could as soon make a meal of the stars and pack them into your belly. You haven’t the things to do it with inside *this*.”

He gave the bishop’s head a little shake and relinquished it.

He began to argue as an elder brother might.

“Isn’t it enough for you to know something of the God that comes down to the human scale, who has been born on your planet and arisen out of Man, who is Man and God, your leader? He’s more than

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enough to fill your mind and use up every faculty of your being. He is courage, he is adventure, he is the King, he fights for you and with you against death. . . .”

“And he is not infinite? He is not the Creator?” asked the bishop.

“So far as you are concerned, no,” said the Angel.

“So far as I am concerned?”

“What have *you* to do with creation?”

And at that question it seemed that a great hand swept carelessly across the blackness of the farther sky, and smeared it with stars and suns and shining nebulae as a brush might smear dry paint across a canvas.

The bishop stared in front of him. Then slowly he bowed his head, and covered his face with his hands.

“And I have been in orders,” he murmured; “I have been teaching people the only orthodox and perfect truth about these things for seven-and-twenty years.”

And suddenly he was back in his gaiters and his apron and his shovel hat, a small black figure, an exceedingly small black figure, in a very great space. . . .

§ 10

It was a very great space indeed because it was all space, and the roof was the ebony of limitless space from which the stars swung flaming, held by invisible ties, and the soil beneath his feet was a dust of atoms and the petty beginnings of life. And long

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before the bishop bared his face again, he knew that he was to see his God.

He looked up slowly, fearing to be dazzled.

But he was not dazzled. He knew that he saw only the likeness and bodying forth of a being inconceivable, of One who is greater than the earth and stars and yet no greater than a man. He saw a being for ever young, for ever beginning, for ever triumphant. The quality and texture of this being was a warm and living light like the effulgence at sunrise; He was hope and courage like a sunlit morning in spring. He was adventure for ever, and His courage and adventure flowed into and submerged and possessed the being of the man who beheld him. And this presence of God stood over the bishop, and seemed to speak to him in a wordless speech.

He bade him surrender himself. He bade him come out upon the Adventure of Life, the great Adventure of the earth that will make the atoms our bond-slaves and subdue the stars, that will build up the white fires of ecstasy to submerge pain for ever, that will overcome death. In Him the spirit of creation had become incarnate, had joined itself to men, summoning men to Him, having need of them; having need of them, having need of their service, even as great kings and generals and leaders need and use men. For a moment, for an endless age, the bishop bowed himself in the being and glory of God, felt the glow of the divine courage and confidence in his marrow, felt himself one with God.

For a timeless interval . . .

Never had the bishop had so intense a sense of

THE FIRST VISION

reality. It seemed that never before had he known anything real. He knew certainly that God was his King and master, and that his unworthy service could be acceptable to God. His mind embraced that idea with an absolute conviction that was also absolute happiness.

§ 11

The thoughts and sensations of the bishop seemed to have lifted for a time clean away from the condition of time, and then through a vast orbit to be returning to that limitation.

He was aware presently that things were changing, that the light was losing its diviner rays, that in some indescribable manner the glory and the assurance diminished.

The onset of the new phase was by imperceptible degrees. From a glowing, serene, and static realisation of God, everything relapsed towards change and activity. He was in time again and things were happening, it was as if the quicksands of time poured by him, and it was as if God was passing away from him. He fell swiftly down from the heaven of self-forgetfulness to a grotesque, pathetic, and earthly self-consciousness.

He became acutely aware of his episcopal livery. And that God was passing away from him.

It was as if God was passing, and as if the bishop was unable to rise up and follow him.

Then it was as if God had passed, and as if the bishop was in headlong pursuit of him and in a great

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terror lest he should be left behind. And he was surely being left behind.

He discovered that in some unaccountable way his gaiters were loose; most of their buttons seemed to have flown off, and his episcopal sash had slipped down about his feet. He was sorely impeded. He kept snatching at these things as he ran, in clumsy attempts to get them off.

At last he had to stop altogether and kneel down and fumble with the last obstinate button.

"Oh God!" he cried, "God my captain! Wait for me! Be patient with me!"

And as he did so God turned back and reached out his hand. It was indeed as if he stood and smiled. He stood and smiled as a kind man might do; he dazzled and blinded his worshipper, and yet it was manifest that he had a hand a man might clasp.

Unspeakable love and joy irradiated the whole being of the bishop as he seized God's hand and clasped it desperately with both his own. It was as if his nerves and arteries and all his substance were inundated with golden light. . . .

It was again as if he merged with God and became God. . . .

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

EXEGETICAL

§ 1

WITHOUT any sense of transition the bishop found himself seated in the little North Library of the Athenæum club and staring at the bust of John Wilson Croker. He was sitting motionless and musing deeply. He was questioning with a cool and steady mind whether he had seen a vision or whether he had had a dream. If it had been a dream it had been an extraordinarily vivid and convincing dream. He still seemed to be in the presence of God, and it perplexed him not at all that he should also be in the presence of Croker. The feeling of mental rottenness and insecurity that had weakened his thought through the period of his illness, had gone. He was secure again within himself.

It did not seem to matter fundamentally whether it was an experience of things without or of things within him that had happened to him. It was clear to him that much that he had seen was at most expressive, that some was altogether symbolical. For example, there was that sudden absurd realisation of his sash and gaiters, and his perception of them as encumbrances in his pursuit of God. But the setting and essential of the whole thing remained in his mind neither expressive nor symbolical, but as real and immediately perceived, and that was the presence

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and kingship of God. God was still with him and about him and over him and sustaining him. He was back again in his world and his ordinary life, in his clothing and his body and his club, but God had been made and remained altogether plain and manifest.

Whether an actual vision had made his conviction, or whether the conviction of his own subconscious mind had made the dream, seemed but a small matter beside the conviction that this was indeed the God he had desired and the God who must rule his life.

"The stuff? The stuff had little to do with it. It just cleared my head. . . . I have seen. I have seen really. I know."

§ 2

For a long time as it seemed the bishop remained wrapped in clouds of luminous meditation. Dream or vision it did not matter; the essential thing was that he had made up his mind about God, he had found God. Moreover he perceived that his theological perplexities had gone. God was higher and simpler and nearer than any theological God, than the God of the Three Creeds. Those creeds lay about in his mind now like garments flung aside, no trace nor suspicion of divinity sustained them any longer. And now— Now he would go out into the world.

The North Library of the Athenæum has no visible door. He went to the book-masked entrance in the corner, and felt among the book-shelves for the

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hidden latch. Then he paused, held by a curious thought. What exactly was the intention of that symbolical struggle with his sash and gaiters, and why had they impeded his pursuit of God?

To what particularly significant action was he going out?

The Three Creeds were like garments flung aside. But he was still wearing the uniform of a priest in the service of those three creeds. . . .

After a long interval he walked into the big reading-room. He ordered some tea and dry toast and butter, and sat down very thoughtfully in a corner. He was still sitting and thinking at half past eight.

It may seem strange to the reader that this bishop who had been doubting and criticising the church and its system of beliefs for four long years had never before faced the possibility of a severance from his ecclesiastical dignity. But he had grown up in the church, his life had been so entirely clerical and Anglican, that the widest separation he had hitherto been able to imagine from this past had left him still a bishop, heretical perhaps, innovating in the broadening of beliefs and the liberalising of practice, defensive even as Chasters was defensive, but still with the palace and his dignities, differing in opinion rather than in any tangible reality from his previous self. For a bishop, disbelief in the Church is a far profounder scepticism than mere disbelief in God. God is unseen, and in daily things unfelt; but the Church is with the predestined bishop always. His concept of the extremest possible departure from orthodoxy had been something that Chasters had

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phrased as "a restatement of Christ." It was a new idea, an idea that had come with an immense effect of severance and novelty, that God could be other than the God of the Creed, could present himself to the imagination as a figure totally unlike the white, gentle, and compromising Redeemer of an Anglican's thought. That the bishop should treat the whole teaching of the church and the church itself as wrong, was an idea so new that it fell upon him now like a thunderbolt out of a cloudless sky. But here, clear in his mind now, was a feeling, amounting to conviction, that it was the purpose and gesture of the true God that he should come right out of the church and all his professions.

And in the first glow of his vision he felt this gesture imperative. He must step right out. . . . *Whither? How? And when?*

To begin with it seemed to him that an immediate renunciation was demanded. But it was a momentous step. He wanted to think. And to go on thinking. Rather than to act precipitately. Although the imperative seemed absolute, some delaying and arresting instinct insisted that he must "think." If he went back to Princhester, the every-day duties of his position would confront him at once with an effect of a definite challenge. He decided to take one of the Reform club bedrooms for two or three days, and wire to Princhester that he was "unavoidably delayed in town," without further explanations. Then perhaps this inhibitory force would give way.

It did not however give way. His mind sat down for two days in a blank amazement at the course

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before him, and at the end of that time this reasonless and formless intuition was as strong as ever. During that time, except for some incidental exchanges at his clubs, he talked to no one. At first he did not want to talk to any one. He remained mentally and practically active, with a still intensely vivid sense that God, the true God, stood watching him and waiting for him to follow. And to follow meant slipping right out of all the world he had ever known. To thrust his foot right over the edge of a cliff would scarcely have demanded more from the bishop's store of resolution. He stood on the very verge. The chief secretion of his mind was a shadowy experiment or so in explanation of why he did not follow.

§ 3

Insensibly the extreme vividness of his sense of God's nearness decreased. But he still retained a persuasion of the reality of an immediate listener waiting, and of the need of satisfying him.

On the third day he found his mind still further changed. He no longer felt that God was in Pall Mall or St. James's Park, whither he resorted to walk and muse. He felt now that God was somewhere about the horizon. . . .

He felt too no longer that he thought straight into the mind of God. He thought now of what he would presently say to God. He turned over and rehearsed phrases. With that came a desire to try them first on some other hearer. And from that to the attentive head of Lady Sunderbund, prettily bent towards

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him, was no great leap. She would understand, if any one could understand, the great change that had happened in his mind.

He found her address in the telephone book. She could be quite alone to him if he wouldn't mind "just me." It was, he said, exactly what he desired.

But when he got to her great airy flat overlooking Hyde Park, with its Omega Workshop furniture and its arresting decoration, he was not so sure whether this encounter was so exactly the thing he had desired as he had supposed.

The world had become opaque and real again as he walked up St. James's Street and past the Ritz. He had a feeling that he was taking an afternoon off from God. The adventurous modernity of the room, in which he waited intensified that. One whole white wall was devoted to a small picture by Wyndham Lewis. It was like a picture of an earthquake in a city of aniline pink and grey and keen green cardboard, and he wished it had never existed.

He turned his back upon it and stared out of the window over the trees and greenery. The balcony was decorated with white and pink geraniums in pots painted black and gold, and the railings of the balcony were black and gold with crimson shapes like squares wildly out of drawing.

Lady Sunderbund kept him waiting perhaps five minutes. Then she came sailing in to him.

She was dressed in a way and moved across the room in a way that was more reminiscent of Botticelli's Spring than ever—only with a kind of super-added stiffish polonaise of lace—and he did not want

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to be reminded of Botticelli's Spring or wonder why she had taken to stiff lace polonaises. He did not inquire whether he had met Lady Sunderbund to better advantage at Mrs. Garstein Fellows' or whether his memory had overrated her or whether anything had happened to his standard of taste, but his feeling now was decidedly one of disappointment, and all the talk and self-examination he had promised himself seemed to wither and hide away within him. For a time he talked of her view, and then admired her room and its arrangement, which he thought really were quite unbecomingly flippant and undignified for a room. Then came the black tea-things on their orange tray, and he searched in his mind for small talk to sustain their interview.

But already in his telephone inquiry he had betrayed his disposition to "go on with our talk," and Lady Sunderbund, perceiving his shyness, began to make openings for him, at first just little *hinting* openings, and then larger and larger ones, until at last one got him.

"I'm so glad," she said, "to see you again. I'm so glad to go on with our talk. I've thought about it and thought about it."

She beamed at him happily.

"I've thought ova ev'y wo'd you said," she went on, when she had finished conveying her pretty bliss to him. "I've been so helped by thinking the k'eds are symbols. And all you said. And I've felt time after time, you couldn't stay whe' you we'. That what you we' saying to me, would have to be said 'ight out."

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That brought him in. He could not very well evade that opening without incivility. After all he had asked to see her, and it was a foolish thing to let little decorative accidentals put him off his friendly purpose. A woman may have flower-pots painted gold with black checkers and still be deeply understanding. He determined to tell her what was in his mind. But he found something barred him from telling that he had had an actual vision of God. It was as if that had been a private and confidential meeting. It wasn't, he felt, for him either to boast a privilege or tell others of things that God had not chosen to show them.

"Since I saw you," he said, "I have thought a great deal—of the subject of our conversation."

"I have been t'ying to think," she said in a confirmatory tone, as if she had co-operated.

"My faith in God grows," he said.

She glowed. Her lips fell apart. She flamed attention.

"But it grows less like the faith of the church, less and less. I was born and trained in Anglicanism, and it is with a sort of astonishment I find myself passing now out of every sort of Catholicism—seeing it from the outside. . . ."

"Just as one might see Buddhism," she supplied.

"And yet feeling nearer—infinately nearer to God," he said.

"Yes," she panted; "yes."

"I thought if one went out, one went out just to doubt and darkness."

"And you don't?"

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"No."

"You have gone at one step to a new 'iligion!"

He stared for a moment at the phrase.

"To religion," he said.

"It is so wondyful," she said, with her hands straight down upon the couch upon which she was sitting, and leaning forward at him, so as to seem almost as much out of drawing as a modern picture.

"It seems," he reflected; "—as if it were a natural thing."

She came back to earth very slowly. She turned to the tea-things with hushed and solemn movements as though she administered a ceremony of peculiar significance. The bishop too rose slowly out of the profundity of his confession. "No sugar please," he said, arresting the lump in mid-air.

It was only when they were embarked upon cups of tea and had a little refreshed themselves, that she carried the talk further.

"Does it mean that you must leave the church?" she asked.

"It seemed so at first," he said. "But now I do not know. I do not know what I ought to do."

She awaited his next thought.

"It is as if one had lived in a room all one's life and thought it the world—and then suddenly walked out through a door and discovered the sea and the mountains and stars. So it was with me and the Anglican Church. It seems so extraordinary now—and it would have seemed the most natural thing a year ago—to think that I ever believed that the Anglican Compromise was the final truth of religion,

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that nothing more until the end of the world could ever be known that Cosmo Gordon Lang did not know, that there could be no conception of God and his quality that Randall Davidson did not possess."

He paused.

"I did," he said.

"*I did*," she responded with round blue eyes of wonder.

"At the utmost the Church of England is a tabernacle on a road."

"A 'oad that goes whe'?" she rhetorised.

"Exactly," said the bishop, and put down his cup.

"You see, my dear Lady Sunderbund," he resumed, "I am exactly in the position of that man at the door."

She quoted aptly and softly: "The wo'ld was all befo' them whe' to choose."

He was struck by the aptness of the words.

"I feel I have to come right out into the bare truth. What exactly then do I become? Do I lose my priestly function because I discover how great God is? But what am I to do?"

He opened a new layer of his thoughts to her.

"There is a saying," he remarked, "once a priest, always a priest. I cannot imagine myself as other than what I am."

"But o'thodox no maw," she said.

"Orthodox—self-satisfied, no longer. A priest who seeks, an exploring priest."

"In a Chu'ch of P'og'ess and B'othe'hood," she carried him on.

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“At any rate, in a progressive and learning church.”

She flashed and glowed assent.

“I have been haunted,” he said, “by those words spoken at Athens. ‘Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.’ That comes to me with an effect of—*guidance* is an old-fashioned word—shall I say suggestion? To stand by the altar bearing strange names and ancient symbols, speaking plainly to all mankind of the one true God——!”

§ 4

He did not get much beyond this point at the time, though he remained talking with Lady Sunderbund for nearly an hour longer. The rest was merely a beating out of what had already been said. But insensibly she renewed her original charm, and as he became accustomed to her he forgot a certain artificiality in her manner and the extreme modernity of her costume and furniture. She was a wonderful listener; nobody else could have helped him to expression in quite the same way, and when he left her he felt that now he was capable of stating his case in a coherent and acceptable form to almost any intelligent hearer. He had a point of view now that was no longer embarrassed by the immediate golden presence of God; he was no longer dazzled nor ecstatic; his problem had diminished to the scale of any other great human problem, to the scale of political problems and problems of integrity and moral principle,

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problems about which there is no such urgency as there is about a house on fire, for example.

And now the desire for expression was running strong. He wanted to state his situation; if he did not state he would have to act; and as he walked back to the club dinner he turned over possible interlocutors in his thoughts. Lord Rampound sat with him at dinner, and he came near broaching the subject with him. But Lord Rampound that evening had that morbid running of bluish legal anecdotes which is so common an affliction with lawyers, and theology sinks and dies in that turbid stream.

But as he lay in bed that night he thought of his old friend and helper Bishop Likeman, and it was borne in upon him that he should consult him. And this he did next day.

Since the days when the bishop had been only plain Mr. Scrope, the youngest and most helpful of Likeman's historical band of curates, their friendship had continued. Likeman had been a second father to him; in particular his tact and helpfulness had shone during those days of doubt and anxiety when dear old Queen Victoria, God's representative on earth, had obstinately refused, at the eleventh hour, to make him a bishop. She had those pig-headed fits, and she was touchy about the bishops. She had liked Scrope on account of the excellence of his German pronunciation, but she had been irritated by newspaper paragraphs—nobody could ever find out who wrote them and nobody could ever find out who showed them to the old lady—anticipating his elevation. She had gone very red in the face and

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stiffened in the Guelphic manner whenever Scrope was mentioned, and so a rich harvest of spiritual life had remained untilled for some months. Likeman had brought her round.

It seemed arguable that Scrope owed some explanation to Likeman before he came to any open breach with the Establishment.

He found Likeman perceptibly older and more shrivelled on account of the war, but still as sweet and lucid and subtle as ever. His voice sounded more than ever like a kind old woman's.

He sat buried in his cushions—for “nowadays I must save every scrap of vitality”—and for a time contented himself with drawing out his visitor's story.

Of course, one does not talk to Likeman of visions or intuitions. “I am disturbed, I find myself getting out of touch”; that was the bishop's tone.

Occasionally Likeman nodded slowly, as a physician might do at the recital of familiar symptoms. “Yes,” he said, “I have been through most of this. . . . A little different in the inessentials. . . . How clear you are!

“You leave our stupid old Trinities—as I left them long ago,” said old Likeman, with his lean hand feeling and clawing at the arm of his chair.

“*But——!*”

The old man raised his hand and dropped it. “You go away from it all—straight as a line. I did. You take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. And there you find——”

He held up a lean finger, and inclined it to tick off each point.

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"Fate—which is God the Father, the Power of the Heart, which is God the Son, and that Light which comes in upon us from the inaccessible Godhead, which is God the Holy Spirit."

"But I know of no God the Holy Spirit, and Fate is not God at all. I saw in my vision one sole God, uncrucified, militant—conquering and to conquer."

Old Likeman stared. "You *saw*!"

The Bishop of Princhester had not meant to go so far. But he stuck to his words. "As if I saw with my eyes. A God of light and courage."

"You have had *visions*, Scrope?"

"I seemed to see."

"No, you have just been dreaming dreams."

"But why should one not see?"

"*See!* The things of the spirit. These symbols as realities! These metaphors as men walking!"

"You talk like an agnostic."

"We are all agnostics. Our creeds are expressions of ourselves and our attitude and relationship to the unknown. The triune God is just the form of our need and disposition. I have always assumed that you took that for granted. Who has ever really seen or heard or felt God? God is neither of the senses nor of the mind; he is of the soul. You are realistic, you are materialistic. . . ."

His voice expostulated.

The Bishop of Princhester reflected. The vision of God was far off among his memories now, and difficult to recall. But he said at last: "I believe there is a God and that he is as real a person as you or I.

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And he is not the theological God we set out before the world."

"Personification," said Likeman. "In the eighteenth century they used to draw beautiful female figures as Science and Mathematics. Young men have loved Science—and Freedom—as Pygmalion loved Galatea. Have it so if you will. Have a visible person for your Deity. But let me keep up my—spirituality."

"Your spirituality seems as thin as a mist. Do you really believe—anything?"

"*Everything!*" said Likeman emphatically, sitting up with a transitory vigour. "Everything we two have ever professed together. I believe that the creeds of my church do express all that can possibly be expressed in the relationship of—*That*"—he made a comprehensive gesture with a twist of his hand upon its wrist—"to the human soul. I believe that they express it as well as the human mind can express it. Where they seem to be contradictory or absurd, it is merely that the mystery is paradoxical. I believe that the story of the Fall and of the Redemption is a complete symbol, that to add to it or to subtract from it or to alter it is to diminish its truth; if it seems incredible at this point or that, then simply I admit my own mental defect. And I believe in our Church, Scrope, as the embodied truth of religion, the divine instrument in human affairs. I believe in the security of its tradition, in the complete and entire soundness of its teaching, in its essential authority and divinity."

He paused, and put his head a little on one side

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and smiled sweetly. "And now can you say I do not believe?"

"But the historical Christ, the man Jesus?"

"A life may be a metaphor. Why not? Yes, I believe it all. All."

The Bishop of Princhester was staggered by this complete acceptance. "I see you believe all you profess," he said, and remained for a moment or so rallying his forces.

"Your vision—if it was a vision—I put it to you, was just some single aspect of divinity," said Like-man. "We make a mistake in supposing that Heresy has no truth in it. Most heresies are only a disproportionate apprehension of some essential truth. Most heretics are men who have suddenly caught a glimpse through the veil of some particular verity. . . . They are dazzled by that aspect. All the rest has vanished. . . . They are obsessed. You are obsessed clearly by this discovery of the militancy of God. God the Son—as Hero. And you want to go out to the simple worship of that one aspect. You want to go out to a Dissenter's tent in the wilderness, instead of staying in the Great Temple of the Ages."

Was that true?

For some moments it sounded true.

The Bishop of Princhester sat frowning and looking at that. Very far away was the vision now of that golden Captain who bade him come. Then at a thought the bishop smiled.

"The Great Temple of the Ages," he repeated. "But do you remember the trouble we had when the little old Queen was so pigheaded?"

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"Oh! I remember, I remember," said Likeman, smiling with unshaken confidence. "Why not?"

"For sixty years all we bishops in what you call the Great Temple of the Ages were appointed and bullied and kept in our places by that pink irascible bit of dignity. . . . I remember how at the time I didn't dare betray my boiling indignation even to you—I scarcely dared admit it to myself. . . ."

He paused.

"It doesn't matter at all," and old Likeman waved it aside.

"Not at all," he confirmed, waving again.

"I spoke of the whole church of Christ on earth," he went on. "These things, these Victorias and Edwards and so on, are temporary accidents—just as the severance of an Anglican from a Roman communion and a Greek orthodox communion are temporary accidents. You will remark that wise men in all ages have been able to surmount the difficulty of these things. Why? Because they knew that in spite of all these splits and irregularities and defacements—like the cracks and crannies and lichens on a cathedral wall—the building held good, that it was shelter and security. There is no other shelter and security. And so I come to your problem. Suppose it is true that you have this incidental vision of the militant aspect of God, and he isn't, as you see him now that is,—he isn't like the Trinity, he isn't like the Creed, he doesn't seem to be related to the Church, then comes the question, are you going out for that? And whither do you go if you do go out? The Church remains. We alter doctrines not by changing the

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words but by shifting the accent. We can under-accentuate below the threshold of consciousness."

"But *can* we?"

"We do. Where's Hell now? Eighty years ago it warmed the whole Church. It was—as some atheist or other put it the other day—the central heating of the soul. But never mind that point now. Consider the essential question, the question of breaking with the church. Ask yourself, whither would you go? To become an oddity! A Dissenter. A Negative. Self emasculated. The spirit that denies. You would just go out. You would just cease to serve Religion. That would be all. You wouldn't *do* anything. The Church would go on; everything else would go on. Only you would be lost in the outer wilderness."

"But then——"

Old Likeman leaned forward and pointed a bony finger. "Stay in the Church and modify it. Bring this new light of yours to the altar."

There was a little pause.

"No man," the bishop thought aloud, "putteth new wine into old bottles."

Old Likeman began to speak and had a fit of coughing. "Some of these texts—whuff, whuff—like a conjurer's hat—whuff—make 'em—fit anything."

A man-servant appeared and handed a silver box of lozenges into which the old bishop dipped with a trembling hand.

"Tricks of that sort," he said, "won't do, Scrope—among professionals.

"And besides," he was inspired; "true religion is old wine—as old as the soul.

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"You are a bishop in the Church of Christ on Earth," he summed it up. "And you want to become a detached and wandering Ancient Mariner from your shipwreck of faith with something to explain—that nobody wants to hear. You are going out—I suppose you have means?"

The old man awaited the answer to his abrupt inquiry with a handful of lozenges.

"No," said the Bishop of Princhester, "*practically*—I haven't."

"My dear boy!" it was as if they were once more rector and curate. "My dear brother! do you know what the value of an ex-bishop is in the ordinary labour market?"

"I have never thought of that."

"Evidently. You have a wife and children?"

"Five daughters."

"And your wife married you—I remember, she married you soon after you got that living in St. John's Wood. I suppose she took it for granted that you were *fixed* in an ecclesiastical career. That was implicit in the transaction."

"I haven't looked very much at that side of the matter yet," said the Bishop of Princhester.

"It shouldn't be a decisive factor," said Bishop Likeman, "not decisive. But it will weigh. It should weigh. . . ."

The old man opened out fresh aspects of the case. His argument was for delay, for deliberation. He went on to a wider set of considerations. A man who has held the position of a bishop for some years is, he held, no longer a free man in matters of opinion.

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He has become an official part of a great edifice which supports the faith of multitudes of simple and dependent believers. He has no right to indulge recklessly in intellectual and moral integrities. He may understand, but how is the flock to understand? He may get his own soul clear, but what will happen to them? He will just break away their supports, astonish them, puzzle them, distress them, deprive them of confidence, convince them of nothing.

"Intellectual egotism may be as grave a sin," said Bishop Likeman, "as physical selfishness.

"Assuming even that you are absolutely right," said Bishop Likeman, "aren't you still rather in the position of a man who insists upon Swedish exercises and a strengthening dietary on a raft?"

"I think you have made out a case for delay," said his hearer.

"Three months."

The Bishop of Princhester conceded three months.

"Including every sort of service. Because, after all, even supposing it is damnable to repeat prayers and creeds you do not believe in, and administer sacraments you think superstition, *nobody can be damned but yourself*. On the other hand if you express doubts that are not yet perfectly digested—you experiment with the souls of others. . . ."

§ 5

The bishop found much to ponder in his old friend's counsels. They were discursive and many-fronted, and whenever he seemed to be penetrating or defeat-

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ing the particular considerations under examination the others in the background had a way of appearing invincible. He had a strong persuasion that Like-man was wrong—and unanswerable. And the true God now was no more than the memory of a very vividly realised idea. It was clear to the bishop that he was no longer a churchman or in the generally accepted sense of the word a Christian, and that he was bound to come out of the church. But all sense of urgency had gone. It was a matter demanding deliberation and very great consideration for others.

He took no more of Dale's stuff because he felt bodily sound and slept well. And he was now a little shy of this potent fluid. He went down to Winchester the next day, for his compromise of an interval of three months made it seem possible to face his episcopal routine again. It was only when he was back in his own palace that the full weight of his domestic responsibilities in the discussion of the course he had to take, became apparent.

Lady Ella met him with affection and solicitude.

"I was tired and mentally fagged," he said. "A day or so in London had an effect of change."

She agreed that he looked much better, and remained for a moment or so scrutinising him with the faint anxiety of one resolved to be completely helpful.

He regarded her with a renewed sense of her grace and dignity and kindness. She was wearing a grey dress of soft silky material, touched with blue and covered with what seemed to him very rich and beautiful lace; her hair flowed back very graciously from her broad brow, and about her wrist and neck

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were delicate lines of gold. She seemed tremendously at home and right just where she was, in that big hospitable room, cultured but Anglican, without pretensions or novelties, with a glow of bound books, with the grand piano that Miriam, his third daughter, was beginning to play so well, with the tea equipage of shining silver and fine porcelain.

He sat down contentedly in the low armchair beside her.

It wasn't a setting that one would rashly destroy. . . .

And that evening at dinner this sense of his home as a complex of finely adjusted things not to be rashly disturbed was still more in the mind of the bishop. At dinner he had all his domesticities about him. It was the family time, from eight until ten, at which latter hour he would usually go back from the drawing-room to his study. He surveyed the table. Eleanor was at home for a few days, looking a little thin and bright but very keen and happy. She had taken a first in the first part of the Moral Science Tripos, and she was working hard now for part two. Clementina was to go back to Newnham with her next September. She aspired to history. Miriam's bent was musical. She and Phoebe and Daphne and Clementina were under the care of skilful Mademoiselle Lafarge, most tactful of Protestant Frenchwomen, Protestant and yet not too Protestant, one of those rare French Protestants in whom a touch of Bergson and the Pasteur Monod

“scarce suspected animates the whole.”

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And also they had lessons, so high are our modern standards of education, from Mr. Blent, a brilliant young mathematician in orders, who sat now next to Lady Ella. Mr. Whippham, the chaplain, was at the bishop's right hand, ready for any chance of making arrangements to clear off the small arrears of duty the little holiday in London had accumulated. The bishop surveyed all these bright young people between himself and the calm beauty of his wife. He spoke first to one and then another upon the things that interested them. It rejoiced his heart to be able to give them education and opportunity, it pleased him to see them in clothes that he knew were none the less expensive because of their complete simplicity. Miriam and Mr. Blent wrangled pleasantly about Debussy, and old Dunk waited as though in orders of some rare and special sort that qualified him for this service.

All these people, the bishop reflected, counted upon him that this would go on. . . .

Eleanor was answering some question of her mother's. They were so oddly alike and so curiously different, and both in their several ways so fine. Eleanor was dark like his own mother. Perhaps she did a little lack Lady Ella's fine reserves; she could express more, she could feel more acutely, she might easily be very unhappy or very happy. . . .

All these people counted on him. It was indeed acutely true, as Likeman had said, that any *sudden* breach with his position would be a breach of faith—so far as they were concerned.

And just then his eye fell upon the epergne, an

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old and beautiful piece of silver that graced the dinner-table. It had been given him, together with an episcopal ring, by his curates and choristers at the Church of the Holy Innocents, when he became bishop of Pinner. When they gave it him, had any one of them dreamt that some day he might be moved to strike an ungracious blow at the mother church that had reared them all?

It was his custom to join the family in the drawing-room after dinner. To-night he was delayed by Whippham, with some trivialities about next month's confirmations in Pringle and Princhester. When he came in he found Miriam playing, and playing quite beautifully one of those later sonatas of Beethoven, he could never remember whether it was Op. 109 or Op. 111, but he knew that he liked it very much; it was solemn and sombre with phases of indescribable sweetness;—while Clementina, Daphne, and Mademoiselle Lafarge went on with their war knitting and Phœbe and Mr. Blent bent their brows over chess. Eleanor was reading the evening paper. Lady Ella sat on a high chair by the coffee things, and he stood in the doorway surveying the peaceful scene for a moment or so before he went across the room and sat down on the couch close to her.

"You look tired," she whispered softly.

"Worries."

"That Chasters case?"

"Things developing out of that. I must tell you later."

It would be, he felt, a good way of breaking the matter to her.

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"Is the Chasters case coming on again, Daddy?" asked Eleanor.

He nodded.

"It's a pity," she said.

"What?"

"That he can't be left alone."

"It's Sir Reginald Phipps. The Church would be much more tolerant if it wasn't for the House of Laymen. But *they*—they feel they must do something."

He seized the opportunity of the music ceasing to get away from the subject. "Miriam dear," he asked, raising his voice; "is that 109 or 111? I can never tell."

"That is *always* 111, Daddy," said Miriam. "It's the other one is 109." And then evidently feeling that she had been pert: "Would you like me to play you 109, Daddy?"

"I should love it, my dear." And he leaned back and prepared to listen in such a thorough way that Eleanor would have no chance of discussing the Chasters' heresies. But this was interrupted by the consummation of the coffee, and Mr. Blent, breaking a long silence with "Mate in three, if I'm not mistaken," leaped to his feet to be of service. Eleanor, with the rough seriousness of youth, would not leave the Chasters case alone.

"But *need* you take action against Mr. Chasters?" she asked at once.

"It's a very complicated subject, my dear," he said.

"His arguments?"

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"The practical considerations."

"But what are practical considerations in such a case?"

"That's a postgraduate subject, Norah," her father said with a smile and a sigh.

"But," began Eleanor, gathering fresh forces.

"Daddy is tired," Lady Ella intervened, patting him on the head.

"Oh terribly!—of that," he said, and so escaped Eleanor for the evening.

But he knew that before very long he would have to tell his wife of the changes that hung over their lives; it would be shabby to let the avalanche fall without giving the longest possible warning; and before they parted that night he took her hands in his and said: "There is much I have to tell you, dear. Things change, the whole world changes. The church must not live in a dream. . . ."

"No," she whispered. "I hope you will sleep to-night," and held up her grave sweet face to be kissed.

§ 6

But he did not sleep perfectly that night.

He did not sleep indeed badly, but he lay for some time thinking, thinking not onward but as if he pressed his mind against very strong barriers that had closed again. His vision of God which had filled the heavens, had become now gem-like, a minute, hard, clear-cut conviction in his mind that he had to disentangle himself from the enormous complications of symbolism and statement and organisation and

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misunderstanding in the church and achieve again a simple and living worship of a simple and living God. Likeman had puzzled and silenced him, only upon reflection to convince him that amidst such intricacies of explanation the spirit cannot live. Creeds may be symbolical, but symbols must not prevaricate. A church that can symbolise everything and anything means nothing.

It followed from this that he ought to leave the church.

But there came the other side of this perplexing situation. His feelings as he lay in his bed were exactly like those one has in a dream when one wishes to run or leap or shout and one can achieve no movement, no sound. He could not conceive how he could possibly leave the church.

His wife became as it were the representative of all that held him helpless. She and he had never kept secret from one another any plan of action, any motive, that affected the other. It was clear to him that any movement towards the disavowal of doctrinal Christianity and the renunciation of his see must be first discussed with her. He must tell her before he told the world.

And he could not imagine the telling except as an incredibly shattering act.

So he left things from day to day, and went about his episcopal routines. He preached and delivered addresses in such phrases as he knew people expected, and wondered profoundly why it was that it should be impossible for him to discuss theological points with Lady Ella. And one afternoon he went for a

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walk with Eleanor along the banks of the Prin, and found himself, in response to certain openings of hers, talking to her in almost exactly the same terms as Likeman had used to him.

Then suddenly the problem of this theological *éclaircissement* was complicated in an unexpected fashion.

He had just been taking his Every Second Thursday Talk with Diocesan Men Helpers. He had been trying to be plain and simple upon the needless narrowness of enthusiastic laymen. He was still in the Bishop Andrewes cap and purple cassock he affected on these occasions; the Men Helpers loved purple; and he was disentangling himself from two or three resolute bores—for our loyal laymen can be at times quite superlative bores—when Miriam came to him.

“Mummy says, ‘Come to the drawing-room if you can.’ There is a Lady Sunderbund who seems particularly to want to see *you*.”

He hesitated for a moment, and then decided that this was a conversation he ought to control.

He found Lady Sunderbund looking very tall and radiantly beautiful in a sheathlike dress of bright crimson trimmed with snow-white fur and a white fur toque. She held out a long white-gloved hand to him and cried in a tone of comradeship and profound understanding: “I’ve come, Bishop!”

“You’ve come to see me?” he said without any sincerity in his polite pleasure.

“I’ve come to P’inchesta to *stay*!” she cried with a bright triumphant rising note.

She evidently considered Lady Ella a mere con-

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versational stop-gap, to be dropped now that the real business could be commenced. She turned her pretty profile to that lady, and obliged the bishop with a compact summary of all that had preceded his arrival. "I have been telling Lady Ella," she said, "I've taken a house, fu'nitua and all! Hea. In P'inchesta! I've made up my mind to *sit unda* you—as they say in Clapham. I've come 'ight down he' fo' good. I've taken a little house—oh! a sweet little house that will be all over 'oses next month. I'm living f'om 'oom to 'oom and having the othas done up. It's in that little quiet st'eeet behind you' ga'den wall. And he' I am!"

"Is it the old doctor's house?" asked Lady Ella.

"*Was* it an old docta?" cried Lady Sunderbund.

"*How* delightful! And now I shall be a patient!"

She concentrated upon the bishop.

"Oh, I've been thinking all the time of all the things you told me. Ova and ova. It's all so wondyful and so—so like a G'ate Daw opening. New light. As if it was all just beginning."

She clasped her hands.

The bishop felt that there were a great number of points to this situation, and that it was extremely difficult to grasp them all at once. But one that seemed of supreme importance to his whirling intelligence was that Lady Ella should not know that he had gone to relieve his soul by talking to Lady Sunderbund in London. It had never occurred to him at the time that there was any shadow of disloyalty to Lady Ella in his going to Lady Sunderbund, but now he realised that this was a thing that would annoy

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Lady Ella extremely. The conversation had in the first place to be kept away from that. And in the second place it had to be kept away from the abrupt exploitation of the new theological developments.

He felt that something of the general tension would be relieved if they could all three be got to sit down.

"I've been talking for just upon two hours," he said to Lady Ella. "It's good to see the water boiling for tea."

He put a chair for Lady Sunderbund to the right of Lady Ella, got her into it by infusing an ecclesiastical insistence into his manner, and then went and sat upon the music-stool on his wife's left, so as to establish a screen of tea-things and cakes and so forth against her more intimate enthusiasm. Meanwhile he began to see his way clearer and to develop his line.

"Well, Lady Sunderbund," he said, "I can assure you that I think you will be no small addition to the church life of Princhester. But I warn you this is a hard-working and exacting diocese. We shall take your money, all we can get of it, we shall take your time, we shall work you hard."

"*Wo'k* me hard," cried Lady Sunderbund with passion.

"We will, we will," said the bishop in a tone that ignored her passionate note.

"I am sure Lady Sunderbund will be a great help to us," said Lady Ella. "We want brightening. There's a dinginess. . . ."

Lady Sunderbund beamed an acknowledgment.

"I shall exact a 'eturn," she said. "I don't mind

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wo'king, but I shall wo'k like the poo' students in the Middle Ages did, to get my teaching. I've got my own soul to save as well as help saving othas. Since our last talk——"

She found the bishop handing her bread and butter.

For a time the bishop fought a delaying action with the tea-things, while he sought eagerly and vainly in his mind for some good practical topic in which he could entangle and suppress Lady Sunderbund's enthusiasms. From this she broke away by turning suddenly to Lady Ella.

"Youa husband's views," she said, "we'e a 'eal 'evelation to me. It was like not being blind—all at once."

Lady Ella was always pleased to hear her husband praised. Her colour brightened a little. "They seem very ordinary views," she said modestly.

"You share them?" cried Lady Sunderbund.

"But of course," said Lady Ella.

"Wondyful!" cried Lady Sunderbund.

"Tell me, Lady Sunderbund," said the bishop, "are you going to alter the outer appearance of the old doctor's house?" And found that at last he had discovered the saving topic.

"Ha'dly at all," she said. "I shall just have it pointed white and do the doa—I'm not su' how I shall do the doa. Whetha I shall do the doa gold or a vehy, vehy 'itch blue."

For a time she and Lady Ella, to whom these ideas were novel, discussed the animation of grey and sombre towns by house-painting. In such matter Lady Sunderbund had a Russian mind. "I can't bea' g'ey,"

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she said. "Not in my su'oundings, not in my k'eed, nowhe'e." She turned to the bishop. "If I had my way I would paint you' cathed'al inside and out."

"They used to be painted," said the bishop. "I don't know if you have seen Ely. There the old painting has been largely restored. . . ."

From that to the end there was no real danger, and at last the bishop found himself alone with his wife again.

"Remarkable person," he said tentatively. "I never met any one whose faults were more visible. I met her at Wimbush House."

He glanced at his watch.

"What did she mean," asked Lady Ella abruptly, "by talking of your new views? And about revelations?"

"She probably misunderstood something I said at the Garstein Fellows'," he said. "She has rather a leaping mind."

He turned to the window, looked at his nails, and appeared to be suddenly reminded of duties elsewhere. . . .

It was chiefly manifest to him that the difficulties in explaining the changes of his outlook to Lady Ella had now increased enormously.

§ 7

A day or so after Lady Sunderbund's arrival in Princhester the bishop had a letter from Likeman. The old man was manifestly in doubt about the effect of their recent conversation.

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“My dear Scrope,” it began. “I find myself thinking continually about our interview and the difficulties you laid bare so frankly to me. We touched upon many things in that talk, and I find myself full of after-thoughts, and not perfectly sure either quite of what I said or of what I failed to say. I feel that in many ways I was not perhaps so clear and convincing as the justice of my case should have made me, and you are one of my own particular little company, you were one of the best workers in that band of good workers, your life and your career are very much my concern. I know you will forgive me if I still mingle something of the paternal with my fraternal admonitions. I watched you closely. I have still my old diaries of the St. Matthew’s days, and I have been looking at them to remind me of what you once were. It was my custom to note my early impressions of all the men who worked with me, because I have a firm belief in the soundness of first impressions and the considerable risk one runs of having them obscured by the accidents and habituations of constant intercourse. I found that quite early in your days at St. Matthew’s I wrote against your name ‘enthusiastic, but a saving delicacy.’ After all our lifelong friendship I could not write anything truer. I would say of you to-day, This man might have been a revivalist, if he were not a gentleman. There is the enthusiast, there is the revivalist, in you. It seems to me that the stresses and questions of this great crisis in the world’s history have brought it nearer to the surface than I had ever expected it to come.

“I quite understand and I sympathise with your

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impatience with the church at the present time; we present a spectacle of pompous insignificance hard to bear with. We are doing very little, and we are giving ourselves preposterous airs. There seems to be an opinion abroad that in some quasi-automatic way the country is going to collapse after the war into the arms of the church and the High Tories; a possibility I don't accept for a moment. Why should it? These forcible-feeble reactionaries are much more likely to explode a revolution that will disestablish us. And I quite understand your theological difficulties—quite. The creeds, if their entire symbolism is for a moment forgotten, if they are taken as opaque statements of fact, are inconsistent, *incredible*. So incredible that no one believes them; not even the most devout. The utmost they do is to avert their minds—reverentially *Credo quia impossibile*. That is offensive to a Western mind. I can quite understand the disposition to cry out at such things, 'This is not the Church of God'—to run out from it——

"You have some dream, I suspect, of a dramatic dissidence.

"Now my dear Brother and erstwhile pupil, I ask you not to do this thing. Wait, I implore you. Give me—and some others, a little time. I have your promise for three months, but even after that, I ask you to wait. Let the reform come from within the church. The church is something more than either its creeds, its clergy, or its laymen. Look at your cathedral rising out of and dominating Princhester. It stands not simply for Athanasius; it stands but incidentally for Athanasius; it stands for all religion.

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Within that fabric—let me be as frank here as in our private conversation—doctrine has altered again and again. To-day two distinct religions worship there side by side; one that fades and one that grows brighter. There is the old quasi-materialistic belief of the barbarians, the belief in such things, for example, as that Christ the physical Son of God descended into hell and stayed there, seeing the sights I suppose like any tourist and being treated with diplomatic civilities for three terrestrial days; and on the other hand there is the truly spiritual belief that you and I share, which is absolutely intolerant of such grotesque ideas. My argument to you is that the new faith, the clearer vision, gains ground; that the only thing that can prevent or delay the church from being altogether possessed by what you call and I admit is the true God, is that such men as yourself, as the light breaks upon you, should be hasty and leave the church. You see my point of view, do you not? It is not one that has been assumed for our discussion; it is one I came to long years ago, that I was already feeling my way to in my St. Matthew's Lenten sermons.

“A word for your private ear. I am working. I cannot tell you fully because I am not working alone. But there are movements afoot in which I hope very shortly to be able to ask you to share. That much at least I may say at this stage. Obscure but very powerful influences are at work for the liberalising of the church, for release from many narrow limitations, for the establishment of a *modus vivendi* with the nonconformist and dissentient bodies in Britain

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and America, and with the churches of the East. But of that no more now.

“And in conclusion, my dear Scrope, let me insist again upon the eternal persistence of the essential Religious Fact:

ΜΗΦΟΒΟΤ
ΕΓΩΕΙΜΙΟΠΡΩΤΟΣΚΑΙΟΕΣΧΑΤΟΣ
ΚΑΙΟΖΩΝ*

And these promises which, even if we are not to take them as promises in the exact sense in which, let us say, the payment of five sovereigns is promised by a five-pound note, are yet assertions of practically inevitable veracity:

ΟΕΝΑΡΞΑΜΕΝΟΣΕΠΙΤΕΛΕΣΕΙ†
ΕΠΙΦΑΤΣΕΙ‡

The old man had written his Greek tags in shakily resolute capitals. It was his custom always to quote the Greek Testament in his letters, never the English version. It is a practice not uncommon with the more scholarly of our bishops. It is as if some eminent scientific man were to insist upon writing H^2O instead of “water,” and “sodium chloride” instead of “table salt” in his private correspondence. Or upon hanging up a stuffed crocodile in his hall to give the place tone. The Bishop of Princhester construed these brief dicta without serious exertion, he found them very congenial texts, but there were insuperable dif-

* Rev. 1: 18. “Fear not. I am the First and Last thing, the Living thing.”

† Phil. 1: 6. “He who began . . . will perfect.”

‡ Eph. 5: 14. “He will illuminate.”

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ficulties in the problem why Likeman should suppose they had the slightest weight upon his side of their discussion. The more he thought the less they seemed to be on Likeman's side, until at last they began to take on a complexion entirely opposed to the old man's insidious arguments, until indeed they began to bear the extraordinary interpretation of a special message, unwittingly delivered.

§ 8

The bishop was still thinking over this communication when he was interrupted by Lady Ella. She came with a letter in her hand to ask him whether she might send five-and-twenty pounds to a poor cousin of his, a teacher in a girls' school, who had been incapacitated from work by a dislocation of the cartilage of her knee. If she could go to that unorthodox but successful practitioner, Mr. Barker, the bone-setter, she was convinced she could be restored to efficiency. But she had no ready money. . . . The bishop agreed without hesitation. His only doubt was the certainty of the cure, but upon that point Lady Ella was convinced; there had been a great experience in the Walshingham family.

"It is pleasant to be able to do things like this," said Lady Ella, standing over him when this matter was settled.

"Yes," the bishop agreed; "it is pleasant to be in a position to do things like this. . . ."

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

THE SECOND VISION

§ 1

A MONTH later found the bishop's original state of perplexity and insomnia returned and intensified. He had done none of all the things that had seemed so manifestly needing to be done after his vision in the Athenæum. All the relief and benefit of his experience in London had vanished out of his life. He was afraid of Dr. Dale's drug; he knew certainly that it would precipitate matters; and all his instincts in the state of moral enfeeblement to which he had relapsed, were to temporise.

Although he had said nothing further about his changed beliefs to Lady Ella, yet he perceived clearly that a shadow had fallen between them. She had a wife's extreme sensitiveness to fine shades of expression and bearing, and manifestly she knew that something was different. Meanwhile Lady Sunderbund had become a frequent worshipper in the cathedral, she was a figure as conspicuous in sombre Princhester as a bird of paradise would have been, common people stood outside her very very rich blue door on the chance of seeing her; she never missed an opportunity of hearing the bishop preach or speak, she wrote him several long and thoughtful letters with which he did not bother Lady Ella, she communicated persistently, and manifestly intended to become a very active worker in diocesan affairs.

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It was inevitable that she and the bishop should meet and talk occasionally in the cathedral precincts, and it was inevitable that he should contrast the flexibility of her rapid and very responsive mind with a certain defensiveness, a *stoniness*, in the intellectual bearing of Lady Ella.

If it had been Lady Sunderbund he had had to explain to, instead of Lady Ella, he could have explained a dozen times a day.

And since his mind was rehearsing explanations it was not unnatural they should overflow into this eagerly receptive channel, and that the less he told Lady Ella the fuller became his spiritual confidences to Lady Sunderbund.

She was clever in realising that they were confidences and treating them as such, more particularly when it chanced that she and Lady Ella and the bishop found themselves in the same conversation.

She made great friends with Miriam, and initiated her by a whole collection of pretty costume plates into the mysteries of the "Ussian Ballet" and the works of Mousso'gski and "Imsky Ko'zakof."

The bishop liked a certain religiosity in the texture of Moussorgski's music, but failed to see the "significance" of many of the costumes.

§ 2

It was on a Sunday night—the fourth Sunday after Easter—that the supreme crisis of the bishop's life began. He had had a feeling all day of extreme dulness and stupidity; he felt his ministrations

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unreal, his ceremonies absurd and undignified. In the night he became bleakly and painfully awake. His mind occupied itself at first chiefly with the tortuousness and weakness of his own character. Every day he perceived that the difficulty of telling Lady Ella of the change in his faith became more mountainous. And every day he procrastinated. If he had told her naturally and simply on the evening of his return from London—before anything material intervened—everything would have been different, everything would have been easier. . . .

He groaned and rolled over in his bed.

There came upon him the acutest remorse and misery. For he saw that amidst these petty immediacies he had lost touch with God. The last month became incredible. He had *seen* God. He had touched God's hand. God had been given to him, and he had neglected the gift. He was still lost amidst the darkness and loneliness, the chaotic ends and mean shifts, of an Erastian world. For a month now and more, after a vision of God so vivid and real and reassuring that surely no saint nor prophet had ever had a better, he had made no more than vague responsive movements; he had allowed himself to be persuaded into an unreasonable and cowardly delay, and the fetters of association and usage and minor interests were as unbroken as they had been before the vision shone. Was it credible that there had been such a vision in a life so entirely dictated by immediacy and instinct as his? We are all creatures of the dark stream, we swim in needs and bodily impulses and small vanities; if ever and again a

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bubble of spiritual imaginativeness glows out of us, it breaks and leaves us where we were.

"*Louse* that I am!" he cried. . . .

He still believed in God, without a shadow of doubt; he believed in the God that he had seen, the high courage, the golden intention, the light that had for a moment touched him. But what had he to do with God, he, the loiterer, the *little* thing?

He was little, he was *funny*. His prevarications with his wife, for example, were comic. There was no other word for him but "funny."

He rolled back again and lay staring.

"Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" What right has a little bishop in a purple stock and doeskin breeches, who hangs back in his palace from the very call of God, to a phrase so fine and tragic as "the body of this death"?

He was the most unreal thing in the universe. He was a base insect giving himself airs. What advantage has a bishop over the Praying Mantis, that cricket which apes the attitude of piety? Does he matter more—to God?

"To the God of the Universe, who can tell? To the God of Man,—*yes*."

He sat up in bed struck by his own answer, and full of an indescribable hunger for God and an indescribable sense of his complete want of courage to make the one simple appeal that would satisfy that hunger. He tried to pray. "O God!" he cried, "forgive me! Take me!" It seemed to him that he was not really praying but only making believe to pray. It seemed to him that he was not really existing but

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only seeming to exist. He seemed to himself to be one with figures on a china plate, with figures painted on walls, with the flimsy imagined lives of men in stories of forgotten times. "O God!" he said, "O God," acting a gesture, mimicking appeal.

"Anæmic," he said, and was given an idea.

He got out of bed, he took his keys from the night-table at the bed head and went to his bureau.

He stood with Dale's tonic in his hand. He remained for some time holding it, and feeling a curious indisposition to go on with the thing in his mind.

He turned at last with an effort. He carried the little phial to his bedside, and into the tumbler of his water-bottle he let the drops fall, drop by drop, until he had counted twenty. Then holding it to the bulb of his reading-lamp he added the water and stood watching the slow pearly eddies in the mixture mingle into an opalescent uniformity. He replaced the water-bottle and stood with the glass in his hand. But he did not drink.

He was afraid.

He knew that he had only to drink and this world of confusion would grow transparent, would roll back and reveal the great simplicities behind. And he was afraid.

He was afraid of that greatness. He was afraid of the great imperatives that he knew would at once take hold of his life. He wanted to muddle on for just a little longer. He wanted to stay just where he was, in his familiar prison-house, with the key of escape in his hand. Before he took the last step into the very presence of truth, he would—*think*. . . .

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He put down the glass and lay down upon his bed. . . .

§ 3

He awoke in a mood of great depression out of a dream of wandering interminably in an endless building of innumerable pillars, pillars so vast and high that the ceiling was lost in darkness. By the scale of these pillars he felt himself scarcely larger than an ant. He was always alone in these wanderings, and always missing something that passed along distant passages, something desirable, something in the nature of a procession or of a ceremony, something of which he was in futile pursuit, of which he heard faint echoes, something luminous of which he seemed at times to see the last fading reflection, across vast halls and wildernesses of shining pavement and through Cyclopæan archways. At last there was neither sound nor gleam, but the utmost solitude, and a darkness and silence and the uttermost profundity of sorrow. . . .

It was bright day. Dunk had just come into the room with his tea, and the tumbler of Dr. Dale's tonic stood untouched upon the night-table. The bishop sat up in bed. He had missed his opportunity. To-day was a busy day, he knew.

"No," he said, as Dunk hesitated whether to remove or leave the tumbler. "Leave that."

Dunk found room for it upon the tea-tray, and vanished softly with the bishop's evening clothes.

The bishop remained motionless facing the day.

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There stood the draught of decision that he had lacked the decision even to touch.

From his bed he could just read the larger items that figured upon the engagement tablet which it was Whippam's business to fill overnight and place upon his table. He had two confirmation services, first the big one in the cathedral and then a second one in the evening at Pringle, various committees and an interview with Chasters. He had not yet finished his addresses for these confirmation services. . . .

The task seemed mountainous—overwhelming. . . .

With a gesture of desperation he seized the tumblerful of tonic and drank it off at a gulp.

§ 4

For some moments nothing seemed to happen.

Then he began to feel stronger and less wretched, and then came a throbbing and tingling of artery and nerve.

He had a sense of adventure, a pleasant fear of the thing that he had done. He got out of bed, leaving his cup of tea untasted, and began to dress. He had the sensation of relief a prisoner may feel who suddenly tries his cell door and finds it open upon sunshine, the outside world and freedom.

He went on dressing although he was certain that in a few minutes the world of delusion about him would dissolve, and that he would find himself again in the great freedom of the place of God. . . .

This time the transition came much sooner and much more rapidly. This time the phases and quality

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of the experience were different. He felt once again that luminous confusion between the world in which a human life is imprisoned and a circumambient and interpenetrating world, but this phase passed very rapidly; it did not spread out over nearly half an hour as it had done before, and almost immediately he seemed to plunge away from everything in this life altogether into that outer freedom he sought. And this time there was not even the elemental scenery of the former vision. He stood on nothing; there was nothing below and nothing above him. There was no sense of falling, no terror, but a feeling as though he floated released. There was no light, but as it were a clear darkness about him. Then it was manifest to him that he was not alone, but that with him was that same being that in his former vision had called himself the Angel of God. He knew this without knowing why he knew this, and either he spoke and was answered, or he thought and his thought answered him back. His state of mind on this occasion was altogether different from the first vision of God; before it had been spectacular, but now his perception was altogether supersensuous.

(And nevertheless and all the time it seemed that very faintly he was still in his room.)

It was he who was the first to speak. The great Angel whom he felt rather than saw seemed to be waiting for him to speak.

"I have come," he said, "because once more I desire to see God."

"But you have seen God."

"I saw God. God was light, God was truth. And

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I went back to my life, and God was hidden. God seemed to call me. He called. I heard him, I sought him and I touched his hand. When I went back to my life I was presently lost in perplexity. I could not tell why God had called me nor what I had to do."

"And why did you not come here before?"

"Doubt and fear. Brother, will you not lay your hand on mine?"

The figure in the darkness became distincter. But nothing touched the bishop's seeking hands.

"I want to see God and to understand him. I want reassurance. I want conviction. I want to understand all that God asks me to do. The world is full of conflict and confusion and the spirit of war. It is dark and dreadful now with suffering and bloodshed. I want to serve God who could save it, and I do not know how."

It seemed to the bishop that now he could distinguish dimly but surely the form and features of the great Angel to whom he talked. For a little while there was silence, and then the Angel spoke.

"It was necessary first," said the Angel, "that you should apprehend God and desire him. That was the purport of your first vision. Now, since you require it, I will tell you and show you certain things about him, things that it seems you need to know, things that all men need to know. Know then first that the time is at hand when God will come into the world and rule it, and when men will know what is required of them. This time is close at hand. In a little while God will be made manifest throughout the earth.

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Men will know him and know that he is King. To you this truth is to be shown—that you may tell it to others.”

“This is no vision?” said the bishop, “no dream that will pass away?”

“Am I not here beside you?”

§ 5

The bishop was anxious to be very clear. Things that had been shapelessly present in his mind now took form and found words for themselves.

“The God I saw in my vision—He is not yet manifest in the world?”

“He comes. He is in the world, but he is not yet manifested. He whom you saw in your vision will speedily be manifest in the world. To you this vision is given of the things that come. The world is already glowing with God. Mankind is like a smouldering fire that will presently, in quite a little time, burst out into flame.

“In your former vision I showed you God,” said the Angel. “This time I will show you certain signs of the coming of God. And then you will understand the place you hold in the world and the task that is required of you.”

§ 6

And as the Angel spoke he lifted up his hands with the palms upward, and there appeared above them a

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little round cloud, that grew denser until it had the likeness of a silver sphere. It was a mirror in the form of a ball, but a mirror not shining uniformly; it was discoloured with greyish patches that had a familiar shape. It circled slowly upon the Angel's hands. It seemed no greater than the compass of a human skull, and yet it was as great as the earth. Indeed it showed the whole earth. It was the earth. The hands of the Angel vanished out of sight, dissolved and vanished, and the spinning world hung free. All about the bishop the velvet darkness broke into glittering points that shaped out the constellations, and nearest to them, so near as to seem only a few million miles away in the great emptiness into which everything had resolved itself, shone the sun, a ball of red-tongued fires. The Angel was but a voice now; the bishop and the Angel were somewhere aloof from and yet accessible to the circling silver sphere.

At the time all that happened seemed to happen quite naturally, as things happen in a dream. It was only later, when all this was a matter of memory, that the bishop realised how strange and incomprehensible his vision had been. The sphere was the earth with all its continents and seas, its ships and cities, its countrysides and mountain ranges. It was so small that he could see it all at once, and so great and full that he could see everything in it. He could see great countries like little patches upon it, and at the same time he could see the faces of the men upon the highways, he could see the feelings in men's hearts and the thoughts in their minds. But it did not seem

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in any way wonderful to the bishop that so he should see those things, or that it was to him that these things were shown.

"This is the whole world," he said.

"This is the vision of the world," the Angel answered.

"It is very wonderful," said the bishop, and stood for a moment marvelling at the compass of his vision. For here was India, here was Samarkand, in the light of the late afternoon; and China and the swarming cities upon her silvery rivers sinking through twilight to the night and throwing a spray and tracery of lantern spots upon the dark; here was Russia under the noontide, and so great a battle of artillery raging on the Dunajec as no man had ever seen before; whole lines of trenches dissolved into clouds of dust and heaps of blood-streaked earth; here close to the waiting streets of Constantinople were the hills of Gallipoli, the grave of British Imperialism, streaming to heaven with the dust and smoke of bursting shells and rifle fire and the smoke and flame of burning brushwood. In the sea of Marmora a big ship crowded with Turkish troops was sinking; and, purple under the clear water, he could see the shape of the British submarine which had torpedoed her and had submerged and was going away. Berlin prepared its frugal meals, still far from famine. He saw the war in Europe as if he saw it on a map, yet every human detail showed. Over hundreds of miles of trenches east and west of Germany he could see shells bursting and the men below dropping, and the stretcher-bearers going back with the wounded. The roads to

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every front were crowded with reserves and munitions. For a moment a little group of men indifferent to all this struggle, who were landing amidst the Antarctic wilderness, held his attention; and then his eyes went westward to the dark rolling Atlantic across which, as the edge of the night was drawn like a curtain, more and still more ships became visible beating upon their courses eastward or westward under the overtaking day.

The wonder increased; the wonder of the single and infinitely multitudinous adventure of mankind.

"So God perhaps sees it," he whispered.

§ 7

"Look at this man," said the Angel, and the black shadow of a hand seemed to point. . . .

It was a Chinaman sitting with two others in a narrow room separated by translucent paper windows from a noisy street of shrill-voiced people. The three had been talking of the ultimatum that Japan had sent that day to China, claiming a priority in many matters over European influences; they were by no means sure whether it was a wrong or a benefit that had been done to their country. From that topic they had passed to the discussion of the war, and then of wars and national aggressions and the perpetual thrusting and quarrelling of mankind. The older man had said that so life would always be; it was the will of Heaven. The very yellow-faced emaciated

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man had agreed with him. But now this younger man, to whose thoughts the Angel had so particularly directed the bishop's attention, was speaking. He did not agree with his companion.

"War is not the will of Heaven," he said; "it is the blindness of men.

"Man changes," he said, "from day to day and from age to age. The science of the West has taught us that. Man changes and war changes and all things change. China has been the land of flowery peace, and she may yet give peace to all the world. She has put aside that puppet Emperor at Peking, she turns her face to the new learning of the West as a man lays aside his heavy robes, in order that her task may be achieved."

The older man spoke, his manner was more than a little incredulous, and yet not altogether contemptuous. "You believe that some day there will be no more war in the world, that a time will come when men will no longer plot and plan against the welfare of men?"

"Even that last," said the younger man. "Did any of us dream twenty-five years ago that here in China we should live to see a republic? The age of the republics draws near, when men in every country of the world will look straight up to the rule of Right and the empire of Heaven."

("And God will be King of the World," said the Angel. "Is not that faith exactly the faith that is coming to you?")

The two other Chinamen questioned their companion, but without hostility.

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"This war," said the Chinaman, "will end in a great harvesting of kings."

"But Japan—" the older man began. . . .

The bishop would have liked to hear more of that conversation, but the dark hand of the Angel motioned him to another part of the world. "Listen to this," said the Angel.

He pointed the bishop to where the armies of Britain and Turkey lay in the heat of Mesopotamia. Along the sandy bank of a wide, slow-flowing river rode two horsemen, an Englishman and a Turk. They were returning from the Turkish lines, whither the Englishman had been with a flag of truce. When Englishmen and Turks are thrown together they soon become friends, and in this case matters had been facilitated by the Englishman's command of the Turkish language. He was quite an exceptional Englishman. The Turk had just been remarking cheerfully that it wouldn't please the Germans if they were to discover how amiably he and his charge had got on. "It's a pity we ever ceased to be friends," he said.

"You Englishmen aren't like *our* Christians," he went on.

The Englishman wanted to know why.

"You haven't priests in robes. You don't chant and worship crosses and pictures, and quarrel among yourselves."

"We worship the same God as you do," said the Englishman.

"Then why do we fight?"

"That's what we want to know."

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"Why do you call yourselves Christians? And take part against us? All who worship the One God are brothers."

"They ought to be," said the Englishman, and thought. He was struck by what seemed to him an amazingly novel idea.

"If it weren't for religions all men would serve God together," he said. "And then there would be no wars—only now and then perhaps just a little honest fighting. . . ."

"And see here," said the Angel. "Here close behind this frightful battle, where the German phalanx of guns pounds its way through the Russian hosts. Here is a young German talking to two wounded Russian prisoners, who have stopped to rest by the roadside. He is a German of East Prussia; he knows and thinks a little Russian. And they too are saying, all three of them, that the war is not God's will, but the confusion of mankind.

"Here," he said, and the shadow of his hand hovered over the burning ghats of Benares, where a Brahmin of the new persuasion watched the straight spires of funereal smoke ascend into the glow of the late afternoon, while he talked to an English painter, his friend, of the blind intolerance of race and caste and custom in India.

"Or here."

The Angel pointed to a group of people who had gathered upon a patch of beach at the head of a Norwegian fiord. There were three lads, an old man and two women, and they stood about the body of a drowned German sailor which had been washed up

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that day. For a time they had talked in whispers, but now suddenly the old man spoke aloud.

"This is the fourth that has come ashore," he said. "Poor drowned souls! Because men will not serve God."

"But folks go to church and pray enough," said one of the women.

"They do not serve God," said the old man. "They just pray to him as one nods to a beggar. They do not serve God who is their King. They set up their false kings and emperors, and so all Europe is covered with dead, and the seas wash up these dead to us. Why does the world suffer these things? Why did we Norwegians, who are a free-spirited people, permit the Germans and the Swedes and the English to set up a king over us? Because we lack faith. Kings mean secret counsels, and secret counsels bring war. Sooner or later war will come to us also if we give the soul of our nation in trust to a king. . . . But things will not always be thus with men. God will not suffer them for ever. A day comes, and it is no distant day, when God himself will rule the earth, and when men will do, not what the king wishes nor what is expedient nor what is customary, but what is manifestly right. . . ."

"But men are saying that now in a thousand places," said the Angel. "Here is something that goes beyond that."

His pointing hand went southward until they saw the Africanders riding down to Windhuk. Two men, Boer farmers both, rode side by side and talked of the German officer they brought prisoner with them.

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He had put sheep-dip in the wells of drinking-water; his life was fairly forfeit, and he was not to be killed. "We want no more hate in South Africa," they agreed. "Dutch and English and German must live here now side by side. Men cannot always be killing."

"And see his thoughts," said the Angel.

The German's mind was one amazement. He had been sure of being shot, he had meant to make a good end, fierce and scornful, a relentless fighter to the last; and these men who might have shot him like a man were going to spare him like a dog. His mind was a tumbled muddle of old and new ideas. He had been brought up in an atmosphere of the foulest and fiercest militarism; he had been trained to relentlessness, ruthlessness, and so forth; war was war and the bitterer the better, frightfulness was your way to victory over every enemy. But these people had found a better way. Here were Dutch and English side by side; sixteen years ago they had been at war together and now they wore the same uniform and rode together, and laughed at him for a queer fellow because he was for spitting at them and defying them, and folding his arms and looking level at the executioners' rifles. There were to be no executioners' rifles. . . . If it was so with Dutch and English, why shouldn't it be so presently with French and Germans? Why some day shouldn't French, German, Dutch and English, Russian and Pole, ride together under this new star of mankind, the Southern Cross, to catch whatever last mischief-maker was left to poison the wells of good-will?

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His mind resisted and struggled against these ideas. "Austere," he whispered. "The ennobling tests of war." A trooper rode up alongside, and offered him a drink of water.

"Just a mouthful," he said apologetically. "We've had to go rather short. . . ."

"There's another brain busy here with the same idea," the Angel interrupted. And the bishop found himself looking into the bedroom of a young German attaché in Washington, sleepless in the small hours.

"Ach!" cried the young man, and sat up in bed and ran his hands through his fair hair.

He had been working late upon this detestable business of the *Lusitania*; the news of her sinking had come to hand two days before, and all America was aflame with it. It might mean war. His task had been to pour out explanations and justifications to the press; to show that it was an act of necessity, to pretend a conviction that the great ship was loaded with munitions, to fight down the hostility and anger that blazed across a continent. He had worked to his limit. He had taken cup after cup of coffee, and had come to bed worked out not two hours ago. Now here he was awake after a nightmare of drowning women and children, trying to comfort his soul by recalling his own arguments. Never once since the war began had he doubted the rightness of the German cause. It seemed only a proof of his nervous exhaustion that he could doubt it now. Germany was the best organised, most cultivated, scientific and liberal nation the earth had ever seen, it was for the good of mankind that she should be the dominant

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power in the world; his patriotism had had the passion of a mission. The English were indolent, the French decadent, the Russians barbaric, the Americans basely democratic; the rest of the world was the "White man's Burden"; the clear destiny of mankind was subservience to the good Prussian eagle. Nevertheless—those wet draggled bodies that swirled down in the eddies of the sinking Titan— Ach! He wished it could have been otherwise. He nursed his knees and prayed that there need not be much more of these things before the spirit of the enemy was broken and the great Peace of Germany came upon the world.

And suddenly he stopped short in his prayer.

Suddenly out of the nothingness and darkness about him came the conviction that God did not listen to his prayers. . . .

Was there any other way?

It was the most awful doubt he had ever had, for it smote at the training of all his life. "Could it be possible that after all our old German God is not the proper style and title of the true God? Is our old German God perhaps only the last of a long succession of bloodstained tribal effigies—and not God at all?"

For a long time it seemed that the bishop watched the thoughts that gathered in the young attaché's mind. Until suddenly he broke into a quotation, into that last cry of the dying Goethe, for "Light. More Light!" . . .

"Leave him at that," said the Angel. "I want you to hear these two young women."

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The hand came back to England and pointed to where Southend at the mouth of the Thames was all agog with the excitement of an overnight Zeppelin raid. People had got up hours before their usual time in order to look at the wrecked houses before they went up to their work in town. Everybody seemed abroad. Two nurses, not very well trained as nurses go nor very well-educated women, were snatching a little sea air upon the front after an eventful night. They were too excited still to sleep. They were talking of the horror of the moment when they saw the nasty thing "up there," and felt helpless as it dropped its bombs. They had both *hated* it.

"There didn't ought to be such things," said one.

"They don't seem needed," said her companion.

"Men won't always go on like this—making wars and all such wickedness."

"It's 'ow to stop them?"

"Science is going to stop them."

"Science?"

"Yes, science. My young brother—oh, he's a clever one—he says such things! He says that it's science that they won't always go on like this. There's more sense coming into the world and more—my young brother says so. Says it stands to reason; it's Evolution. It's science that men are all brothers; you can prove it. It's science that there oughtn't to be war. Science is ending war now by making it horrible like this, and making it so that no one is safe. Showing it up. Only when nobody is safe will everybody want to set up peace, he says. He says it's proved there could easily be peace all over the world

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now if it wasn't for flags and kings and capitalists and priests. They still manage to keep safe and out of it. He says the world ought to be just one state. The World State, he says it ought to be."

("Under God," said the bishop, "under God.")

"He says science ought to be King of the whole world."

"Call it Science if you will," said the bishop. "God is wisdom."

"Out of the mouths of babes and elementary science students," said the Angel. "The very children in the board schools are turning against this narrowness and nonsense and mischief of nations and creeds and kings. You see it at a thousand points, at ten thousand points, look, the world is all flashing and flickering; it is like a spinthariscopes; it is aquiver with the light that is coming to mankind. It is on the verge of blazing even now."

"Into a light."

"Into the one Kingdom of God. See here! See here! And here! This brave little French priest in a helmet of steel who is daring to think for the first time in his life; this gentle-mannered emir from Morocco looking at the grave-diggers on the battlefield; this mother who has lost her son. . . .

"You see they all turn in one direction, although none of them seem to dream yet that they are all turning in the same direction. They turn, every one, to the rule of righteousness, which is the rule of God. They turn to that communism of effort in the world which alone permits men to serve God in state and city and their economic lives. . . . They are all com-

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ing to the verge of the same salvation, the salvation of one human brotherhood under the rule of one Righteousness, one Divine will. . . . Is that the salvation your church offers?"

§ 8

"And now that we have seen how religion grows and spreads in men's hearts, now that the fields are white with harvest, I want you to look also and see what the teachers of religion are doing," said the Angel.

He smiled. His presence became more definite, and the earthly globe about them and the sun and the stars grew less distinct and less immediately there. The silence invited the bishop to speak.

"In the light of this vision, I see my church plainly for the little thing it is," he said.

He wanted to be perfectly clear with the Angel and himself.

"This church of which I am a bishop is just a part of our poor human struggle, small and pitiful as one thinks of it here in the light of the advent of God's Kingdom, but very great, very great indeed, ancient and high and venerable, in comparison with me. But mostly it is human. It is most human. For my story is the church's story, and the church's story is mine. Here I could almost believe myself the church itself. The world saw a light, the nations that were sitting in darkness saw a great light. Even as I saw God. And then the church began to forget and lose itself among secondary things. As I have done. . . . It

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tried to express the truth and lost itself in a maze of theology. It tried to bring order into the world and sold its faith to Constantine. These men who had professed the Invisible King of the World, shirked his service. It is a most terrible disaster that Christianity has sold itself to emperors and kings. They forged a saying of the Master's that we should render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's. . . .

"Who is this Cæsar to set himself up to share mankind with God? Nothing that is Cæsar's can be any the less God's. But Constantine Cæsar sat in the midst of the council, his guards were all about it, and the poor fanatics and trimmers and schemers disputed nervously with their eyes on him, disputed about *homoousian* and *homoiousian*, and grimaced and pretended to be very very fierce and exact to hide how much they were frightened and how little they knew, and because they did not dare to lay violent hands upon that usurper of the empire of the world. . . .

"And from that day forth the Christian churches have been damned and lost. Kept churches. Lackey churches. Roman, Russian, Anglican; it matters not. My church indeed was twice sold, for it doubled the sin of Nicæa and gave itself over to Henry and Elizabeth while it shammed a dispute about the sacraments. No one cared really about transubstantiation any more than the earlier betrayers cared about consubstantiality; that dispute did but serve to mask the betrayal."

He turned to the listening Angel. "What can you show me of my church that I do not know? Why!

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we Anglican bishops get our sees as footmen get a job. For months Victoria, that old German Frau, delayed me—because of some tittle-tattle. . . . The things we are! Snape, who afterwards became Bishop of Burnham, used to waylay the Prince Consort when he was riding in Hyde Park and give him, he boasts, ‘a good loud cheer,’ and then he would run very fast across the park so as to catch him as he came round, and do it again. . . . It is to that sort of thing we bearers of the light have sunken. . . .

“I have always despised that poor toady,” the bishop went on. “And yet here am I, and God has called me and shown me the light of his countenance, and for a month I have faltered. That is the mystery of the human heart, that it can and does sin against the light. What right have I, who have seen the light—and failed, what right have I—to despise any other human being? I seem to have been held back by a sort of paralysis. . . .

“Men are so small, so small still, that they cannot keep hold of the vision of God. That is why I want to see God again. . . . But if it were not for this strange drug that seems for a while to lift my mind above the confusion and personal entanglements of every day, I doubt if even now I could be here. I am here, passionate to hold this moment and keep the light. As this inspiration passes, I shall go back, I know, to my home and my place and my limitations. The littleness of men! The forgetfulness of men! I want to know what my chief duty is to have it plain, in terms so plain that I can never forget. . . .

“See in this world,” he said, turning to the globe,

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“while Chinese merchants and Turkish troopers, school-board boys and Norwegian fishermen, half-trained nurses and Boer farmers are full of the spirit of God, see how the priests of the churches of Nicæa spend their time.”

And now it was the bishop whose dark hands ran over the great silver globe, and it was the Angel who stood over him and listened, as a teacher might stand over a child who is learning a lesson. The bishop's hand rested for a second on a cardinal who was planning a political intrigue to produce a reaction in France, then for a moment on a Pomeranian pastor who was going out to his well-tilled fields with his Sunday sermon, full of fierce hatred of England, still echoing in his head. Then he paused at a Mollah preaching the Jihad, in doubt whether he too wasn't a German pastor, and then at an Anglican clergyman still lying abed and thinking out a great mission of Repentance and Hope that should restore the authority of the established church—by incoherent missioning—without any definite sin indicated for repentance nor any clear hope for anything in particular arising out of such activities. The bishop's hand went seeking to and fro, but nowhere could he find any religious teacher, any religious body rousing itself to meet the new dawn of faith in the world. Some few men indeed seemed thoughtful, but within the limitation of their vows. Everywhere it was church and creed and nation and king and property and partisanship, and nowhere was it the True God that the priests and teachers were upholding. It was always the common unhampered man through whom the light

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of God was breaking; it was always the creed and the organisation of the religious professionals that stood in the way to God. . . .

"God is putting the priests aside," he cried, "and reaching out to common men. The churches do not serve God. They stand between man and God. They are like great barricades on the way to God."

The bishop's hand brushed over Archbishop Pontifex, who was just coming down to breakfast in his palace. This pompous old man was dressed in a purple garment that set off his tall figure very finely, and he was holding out his episcopal ring for his guests to kiss, that being the customary morning greeting of Archbishop Pontifex. The thought of that ring-kissing had made much hard work at lower levels "worth while" to Archbishop Pontifex. And seventy miles away from him old Likeman breakfasted in bed on Bengers' food, and searched his Greek Testament for tags to put to his letters. And here was the familiar palace at Princhester, and in an armchair in his bedroom sat Bishop Scrope insensible and motionless, in a trance in which he was dreaming of the coming of God. . . .

"I see my futility. I see my vanity. But what am I to do?" he said, turning to the darkness that now wrapped about the Angel again, fold upon fold. "The implications of yesterday bind me for the morrow. This is my world. This is what I am and what I am in. How can I save myself? How can I turn from these habits and customs and obligations to the service of the one true God? When I see myself, then I understand how it is with the others. All we priests

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and teachers are men caught in nets. I would serve God. Easily said! But *how* am I to serve God? How am I to help and forward his coming, to make myself part of his coming?"

He perceived that he was returning into himself, and that the vision of the sphere and of the starry spaces was fading into non-existence.

He struggled against this return. He felt that his demand was still unanswered. His wife's face had suddenly come very close to him, and he realised she intervened between him and that solution. . . .

What was she doing here?

§ 9

The great Angel seemed still to be near at hand, limitless space was all about him, and yet the bishop perceived that he was now sitting in the armchair in his bedroom in the palace of Princhester. He was both there and not there. It seemed now as if he had two distinct yet kindred selves, and that the former watched the latter. The latter was now awakening to the things about him; the former marked his gestures and listened with an entire detachment to the words he was saying. These words he was saying to Lady Ella: "God is coming to rule the world, I tell you. We must leave the church."

Close to him sat Lady Ella, watching him with an expression in which dismay and resolution mingled. Upon the other side of him, upon an occasional table, was a tray with breakfast things. He was no longer the watcher now, but the watched.

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Lady Ella bent towards him as he spoke. She seemed to struggle with and dismiss his astonishing statement.

"Edward," she said, "you have been taking a drug."

He looked round at his night-table to see the little phial. It had gone. Then he saw that Lady Ella held it very firmly in her hand.

"Dunk came to me in great distress. He said you were insensible and breathing heavily. I came. I realised. I told him to say nothing to any one, but to fetch me a tray with your breakfast. I have kept all the other servants away and I have waited here by you. . . . Dunk I think is safe. . . . You have been muttering and moving your head from side to side. . . ."

The bishop's mind was confused. He felt as though God must be standing just outside the room. "I have failed in my duty," he said. "But I am very near to God." He laid his hand on her arm. "You know, Ella, he is very close to us. . . ."

She looked perplexed.

He sat up in his chair.

"For some months now," he said, "there have been new forces at work in my mind. I have been invaded by strange doubts and still stranger realisations. This old church of ours is an empty mask. God is not specially concerned in it."

"Edward!" she cried, "what are you saying?"

"I have been hesitating to tell you. But I see now I must tell you plainly. Our church is a cast hull. It is like the empty skin of a snake. God has gone out of it."

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She rose to her feet. She was so horrified that she staggered backward, pushing her chair behind her. "But you are *mad*," she said.

He was astonished at her distress. He stood up also.

"My dear," he said, "I can assure you I am not mad. I should have prepared you, I know. . . ."

She looked at him wild-eyed. Then she glanced at the phial, gripped in her hand.

"*Oh!*" she exclaimed, and going swiftly to the window emptied out the contents of the bottle. He realised what she was doing too late to prevent her.

"Don't waste that!" he cried, and stepping forward caught hold of her wrist. The phial fell from her white fingers, and crashed upon the rough paved garden path below.

"My dear," he cried, "my dear. You do not understand."

They stood face to face. "It was a tonic," he said. "I have been ill. I need it."

"It is a drug," she answered. "You have been uttering blasphemies."

He dropped her arm and walked half-way across the room. Then he turned and faced her.

"They are not blasphemies," he said. "But I ought not to have surprised you and shocked you as I have done. I want to tell you of changes that have happened to my mind."

"*Now!*" she exclaimed, and then: "I will not hear them now. Until you are better. Until these fumes——"

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Her manner changed. "Oh, Edward!" she cried, "why have you done this? Why have you taken things secretly? I know you have been sleepless, but I have been so ready to help you. I have been willing—you know I have been willing—for any help. My life is all to be of use to you. . . .

"Is there any reason," she pleaded, "why you should have hidden things from me?"

He stood remorseful and distressed. "I should have talked to you," he said lamely.

"Edward," she said, laying her hands on his shoulders, "will you do one thing for me? Will you try to eat a little breakfast? And stay here? I will go down to Mr. Whippham and arrange whatever is urgent with him. Perhaps if you rest— There is nothing really imperative until the confirmation in the afternoon. . . . I do not understand all this. For some time—I have felt it was going on. But of that we can talk. The thing now is that people should not know, that nothing should be seen. . . . Suppose for instance that horrible *White Blackbird* were to hear of it. . . . I implore you. If you rest here— And if I were to send for that young doctor who attended Miriam."

"I don't want a doctor," said the bishop.

"But you ought to have a doctor."

"I *won't* have a doctor," said the bishop.

It was with a perplexed but powerless dissent that the externalised perceptions of the bishop witnessed his agreement with the rest of Lady Ella's proposals so soon as this point about the doctor was conceded. . . .

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§ 10

For the rest of that day until his breakdown in the cathedral the sense of being in two places at the same time haunted the bishop's mind. He stood beside the Angel in the great space amidst the stars, and at the same time he was back in his ordinary life, he was in his palace at Princhester, first resting in his bedroom and talking to his wife and presently taking up the routine of his duties again in his study downstairs.

His chief task was to finish his two addresses for the confirmation services of the day. He read over his notes, and threw them aside and remained for a time thinking deeply. The Greek tags at the end of Likeman's letter came into his thoughts; they assumed a quality of peculiar relevance to this present occasion. He repeated the words: "*Epiteleseï, Epiphauseï.*"

He took his New Testament to verify them. After some slight trouble he located the two texts. The first, from Philippians, ran in the old version, "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it"; the second was expressed thus: "Christ shall give thee light." He was dissatisfied with these renderings and resorted to the revised version, which gave "perfect" instead of "perform," and "shall shine upon you" for "give thee light." He reflected profoundly for a time.

Then suddenly his addresses began to take shape in his mind, and these little points lost any significance. He began to write rapidly, and as he wrote

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he felt the Angel stood by his right hand and read and approved what he was writing. There were moments when his mind seemed to be working entirely beyond his control. He had a transitory questioning whether this curious intellectual automatism was not perhaps what people meant by "inspiration."

§ 11

The bishop had always been sensitive to the secret fount of pathos that is hidden in the spectacle of youth. Long years ago when he and Lady Ella had been in Florence he had been moved to tears by the beauty of the fresh-faced eager Tobit who runs beside the great angel in the picture of Botticelli. And suddenly and almost as uncontrollably, that feeling returned at the sight of the young congregation below him, of all these scores of neophytes who were gathered to make a public acknowledgment of God. The war has invested all youth now with the shadow of tragedy; before it came many of us were a little envious of youth and a little too assured of its certainty of happiness. All that has changed. Fear and a certain tender solicitude mingle in our regard for every child; not a lad we pass in the street but may presently be called to face such pain and stress and danger as no ancient hero ever knew. The patronage, the insolent condescension of age, has vanished out of the world. It is dreadful to look upon the young.

He stood surveying the faces of the young people as the rector read the Preface to the confirmation service. How simple they were, how innocent! Some

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were a little flushed by the excitement of the occasion; some a little pallid. But they were all such tender faces, so soft in outline, so fresh and delicate in texture and colour. They had soft credulous mouths. Some glanced sideways at one another; some listened with a forced intentness. The expression of one good-looking boy, sitting in a corner seat, struck the bishop as being curiously defiant. He sat very erect, he blinked his eyes as though they smarted, his lips were compressed bitterly. And then it seemed to the bishop that the Angel stood beside him and gave him understanding.

"He is here," the bishop knew, "because he could not avoid coming. He tried to excuse himself. His mother wept. What could he do? But the church's teaching nowadays fails even to grip the minds of boys."

The rector came to the end of his Preface: "They will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things as they by their own confession have assented unto."

"Like a smart solicitor pinning them down," said the bishop to himself, and then roused himself, unrolled the paper in his hand, leaned forward, and straightway began his first address.

Nowadays it is possible to say very unorthodox things indeed in an Anglican pulpit unchallenged. There remains no alert doctrinal criticism in the church congregations. It was possible, therefore, for the bishop to say all that follows without either hindrance or disturbance. The only opposition, indeed, came from within, from a sense of dreamlike incon-

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gruity between the place and the occasion and the things that he found himself delivering.

"All ceremonies," he began, "grow old. All ceremonies are tainted even from the first by things less worthy than their first intention, and you, my dear sons and daughters, who have gathered to-day in this worn and ancient building, beneath these monuments to ancient vanities and these symbols of forgotten or abandoned theories about the mystery of God, will do well to distinguish in your minds between what is essential and what is superfluous and confusing in this dedication you make of yourselves to God our Master and King. For that is the real thing you seek to do to-day, to give yourselves to God. This is your spiritual coming of age, in which you set aside your childish dependence upon teachers and upon taught phrases, upon rote and direction, and stand up to look your Master in the face. You profess a great brotherhood when you do that, a brotherhood that goes round the earth, that numbers men of every race and nation and country, that aims to bring God into all the affairs of this world and make him not only the king of your individual lives but the king—in place of all the upstarts, usurpers, accidents, and absurdities who bear crowns and sceptres to-day—of a united mankind."

He paused, and in the pause he heard a rustle as though the congregation before him was sitting up in its places, a sound that always nerves and reassures an experienced preacher.

"This, my dear children, is the reality of this grave business to-day, as indeed it is the real and practical

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end of all true religion. This is your *sacramentum*, your soldier's oath. You salute and give your fealty to the coming Kingdom of God. And upon that I would have you fix your minds to the exclusion of much that, I know only too well, has been narrow and evil and sectarian in your preparation for this solemn rite. God is like a precious jewel found among much rubble; you must cast the rubble from you. The crowning triumph of the human mind is simplicity; the supreme significance of God lies in his unity and universality. The God you salute to-day is the God of the Jews and Gentiles alike, the God of Islam, the God of the Brahma Samaj, the unknown God of many a righteous unbeliever. He is not the God of those felted theologies and inexplicable doctrines with which your teachers may have confused your minds. I would have it very clear in your minds that having 'drunken the draught you should not reverence unduly the cracked old vessel that has brought it to your lips. I should be falling short of my duty if I did not make that and everything I mean by that altogether plain to you."

He saw the lad whose face of dull defiance he had marked before, sitting now with a startled interest in his eyes. The bishop leaned over the desk before him, and continued in the persuasive tone of a man who speaks of things too manifest for laboured argument.

"In all ages religion has come from God through broad-minded creative men, and in all ages it has fallen very quickly into the hands of intense and conservative men. These last—narrow, fearful, and suspicious—have sought in every age to save the

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precious gift of religion by putting it into a prison of formulæ and asseverations. Bear that in mind when you are pressed to definition. It is as if you made a box hermetically sealed to save the treasure of a fresh breeze from the sea. But they have sought out exact statements and tortuous explanations of the plain truth of God, they have tried to take down God in writing, to commit him to documents, to embalm his living faith as though it would otherwise corrupt. So they have lost God and fallen into endless differences, disputes, violence, and darkness about insignificant things. They have divided religion between this creed and teacher and that. 'The corruption of the best is the worst,' said Aristotle; and the great religions of the world, and especially this Christianity of ours, are the ones most darkened and divided and wasted by the fussings and false exactitudes of the creed-monger and the sectary. There is no lie so bad as a stale disfigured truth. There is no heresy so damnable as a narrow orthodoxy. All religious associations carry this danger of the overstatement that misstates and the overemphasis that divides and betrays. Beware of that danger. Do not imagine, because you are gathered in this queerly beautiful old building to-day, because I preside here in this odd raiment of an odder compromise, because you see about you in coloured glass and carven stone the emblems of much vain disputation, that thereby you cut yourselves off and come apart from the great world of faith, Catholic, Islamic, Brahministic, Buddhist, that grows now to a common consciousness of the near Advent of God our King. You enter that

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waiting world fraternity now, you do not leave it. This place, this church of ours, should be to you not a seclusion and a fastness but a door.

“I could quote you a score of instances to establish that this simple universalism was also the teaching of Christ. But now I will only remind you that it was Mary who went to her Lord simply, who was commended, and not Martha who troubled about many things. Learn from the Mary of Faith and not from these Marthas of the Creeds. Let us abandon the presumptions of an ignorant past. The perfection of doctrine is not for finite men. Give yourselves to God. Give yourselves to God. Not to churches and uses but to God. To God simply. He is the first word of religion and the last. He is Alpha; he is Omega. *Epiteleseis*; it is he who will finish the good work begun.”

The bishop ended his address in a vivid silence. Then he began his interrogation.

“Do you here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves——”

He stopped short. The next words were: “bound to believe and do all those things, which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you.”

He could not stand those words. He hesitated, and then substituted: “acknowledge yourselves to be the true servants of the one God, who is the Lord of Mankind?”

For a moment silence hung in the cathedral. Then

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one voice, a boy's voice, led a ragged response. "I do."

Then the bishop: "Our help is in the Name of the Lord."

The congregation answered doubtfully, with a glance at its prayer-books: "Who hath made heaven and earth."

The bishop: "Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

The congregation said with returning confidence: "Henceforth, world without end."

§ 12

Before his second address the bishop had to listen to *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, in its English form, and it seemed to him the worst of all possible hymns. Its defects became monstrously exaggerated to his hypersensitive mind. It impressed him in its English travesty as a grotesque, as a veritable Charlie Chaplin among hymns, and in truth it does stick out most awkward feet, it misses its accusatives, it catches absurdly upon points of abstruse doctrine. The great Angel stood motionless and ironical at the bishop's elbow while it was being sung. "*Your church*," he seemed to say.

"We must end this sort of thing," whispered the bishop. "We must end this sort of thing—absolutely." He glanced at the faces of the singers, and it became beyond all other things urgent that he should lift them once for all above the sectarian dogmatism of that hymn to a simple vision of God's light. . . .

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He roused himself to the touching business of the laying on of hands. While he did so the prepared substance of his second address was running through his mind. The following prayer and collects he read without difficulty, and so came to his second address. His disposition at first was explanatory.

"When I spoke to you just now," he began, "I fell unintentionally into the use of a Greek word, *epiteleseis*. It was written to me in a letter from a friend with another word that also I am now going to quote to you. This letter touched very closely upon the things I want to say to you now, and so these two words are very much in my mind. The former one was taken from the Epistle to the Philippians; it signifies, 'He will complete the work begun'; the one I have now in mind comes from the Epistle to the Ephesians; it is *Epiphauseis*—or, to be fuller, *epiphauseis soi ho Christos*, which signifies that He will shine upon us. And this is very much in my thoughts now because I do believe that this world, which seemed so very far from God a little while ago, draws near now to an unexampled dawn. God is at hand.

"It is your privilege, it is your grave and terrible position, that you have been born at the very end and collapse of a negligent age, of an age of sham kingship, sham freedom, relaxation, evasion, greed, waste, falsehood, and sinister preparation. Your lives open out in the midst of the breakdown for which that age prepared. To you negligence is no longer possible. There is cold and darkness, there is the heat of the furnace before you; you will live amidst extremes such as our youth never knew; what-

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ever betide, you of your generation will have small chance of living untempered lives. Our country is at war and half mankind is at war; death and destruction trample through the world; men rot and die by the million, food diminishes and fails, there is a wasting away of all the hoarded resources, of all the accumulated well-being of mankind; and there is no clear prospect yet of any end to this enormous and frightful conflict. Why did it ever arise? What made it possible? It arose because men had forgotten God. It was possible because they worshipped simulacra, were loyal to phantoms of race and empire, permitted themselves to be ruled and misled by idiot princes and usurper kings. Their minds were turned from God, who alone can rule and unite mankind, and so they have passed from the glare and follies of those former years into the darkness and anguish of the present day. And in darkness and anguish they will remain until they turn to that King who comes to rule them, until the sword and indignation of God have overthrown their misleaders and oppressors, and the Justice of God, the Kingdom of God set high over the republics of mankind, has brought peace for ever to the world. It is to this militant and imminent God, to this immortal Captain, this undying Law-giver, that you devote yourselves to-day.

“For he is imminent now. He comes. I have seen in the east and in the west, the hearts and the minds and the wills of men turning to him as surely as when a needle is magnetised it turns towards the north. Even now as I preach to you here, God stands over us all, ready to receive us. . . .”

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And as he said these words, the long nave of the cathedral, the shadows of its fretted roof, the brown choir with its golden screen, the rows of seated figures, became like some picture cast upon a flimsy and translucent curtain. Once more it seemed to the bishop that he saw God plain. Once more the glorious effulgence poured about him, and the beautiful and wonderful conquest of men's hearts and lives was manifest to him.

He lifted up his hands and cried to God, and with an emotion so profound, an earnestness so commanding, that very many of those who were present turned their faces to see the figure to which he looked and spoke. And some of the children had a strange persuasion of a presence there, as of a divine figure militant, armed, and serene. . . .

"Oh God our Leader and our Master and our Friend," the bishop prayed, "forgive our imperfections and our little motives, take us and make us one with thy great purpose, use us and do not reject us, make us all here servants of thy kingdom, weave our lives into thy struggle to conquer and to bring peace and union to the world. We are small and feeble creatures, we are feeble in speech, feebler still in action, nevertheless let but thy light shine upon us and there is not one of us who cannot be lit by thy fire, and who cannot lose himself in thy salvation. Take us into thy purpose, O God. Let thy kingdom come into our hearts and into this world."

His voice ceased, and he stood for a measurable time with his arms extended and his face upturned. . . .

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The golden clouds that whirled and eddied so splendidly in his brain thinned out, his sense of God's immediacy faded and passed, and he was left aware of the cathedral pulpit in which he stood so strangely posed, and of the astonished congregation below him. His arms sank to his side. His eyes fell upon the book in front of him and he felt for and gripped the two upper corners of it, and regardless of the common order and practice read out the Benediction, changing the words involuntarily as he read:

"The Blessing of God who is the Father, the Son, the Spirit and the King of all Mankind, be upon you and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*"

Then he looked again, as if to look once more upon that radiant vision of God, but now he saw only the clear cool space of the cathedral vault and the coloured glass and tracery of the great rose window. And then, as the first notes of the organ came pealing above the departing stir of the congregation, he turned about and descended slowly, like one who is still half dreaming, from the pulpit.

§ 13

In the vestry he found Canon Bliss. "Help me to take off these garments," the bishop said. "I shall never wear them again."

"You are ill," said the canon, scrutinising his face.

"Not ill. But the word was taken out of my mouth. I perceive now that I have been in a trance, a trance in which the truth is *real*. It is a fearful thing to find oneself among realities. It is a dreadful

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thing when God begins to haunt a priest. . . . I can never minister in the church again."

Whippham thrust forward a chair for the bishop to sit down. The bishop felt now extraordinarily fatigued. He sat down heavily, and rested his wrists on the arms of the chair. "Already," he resumed presently, "I begin to forget what it was I said."

"You became excited," said Bliss, "and spoke very loudly and clearly."

"What did I say?"

"I don't know what you said; I have forgotten. I never want to remember. Things about the Second Advent. Dreadful things. You said God was close at hand. Happily you spoke partly in Greek. I doubt if any of those children understood. And you had a kind of lapse—an aphasia. You mutilated the interrogation and you did not pronounce the benediction properly. You changed words and you put in words. One sat frozen—waiting for what would happen next."

"We must postpone the Pringle confirmation," said Whippham. "I wonder to whom I could telephone."

Lady Ella appeared, and came and knelt down by the bishop's chair. "I never ought to have let this happen," she said, taking his wrists in her hands. "You are in a fever, dear."

"It seemed entirely natural to say what I did," the bishop declared.

Lady Ella looked up at Bliss.

"A doctor has been sent for," said the canon to Lady Ella.

"I must speak to the doctor," said Lady Ella as if

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her husband could not hear her. "There is something that will make things clearer to the doctor. I must speak to the doctor for a moment before he sees him."

Came a gust of pretty sounds and a flash of bright colour that shamed the rich vestments at hand. Over the shoulder of the rector and quite at the back, appeared Lady Sunderbund resolutely invading the vestry. The rector intercepted her, stood broad with extended arms.

"I must come in and speak to him. If it is only for a moment."

The bishop looked up and saw Lady Ella's expression. Lady Ella was sitting up very stiffly, listening but not looking round.

A vague horror and a passionate desire to prevent the entry of Lady Sunderbund at any cost, seized upon the bishop. She would, he felt, be the last overwhelming complication. He descended to a base subterfuge. He lay back in his chair slowly as though he unfolded himself, he covered his eyes with his hand and then groaned aloud.

"Leave me alone!" he cried in a voice of agony. "Leave me alone! I can see no one. . . . I *can*—no more."

There was a momentous silence, and then the tumult of Lady Sunderbund receded.

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him not to do so. He lay for the best part of one night confiding remarkable things to two imaginary ordination candidates. . . .

He developed a marked liking for Eleanor's company. She was home again now after a visit to some friends. It was decided that the best thing to do with him would be to send him away in her charge. A journey abroad was impossible. France would remind him too dreadfully of the war. His own mind turned suddenly to the sweet air of Hunstanton. He had gone there at times to read, in the old Cambridge days. "It is a terribly ugly place," he said, "but it is wine in the veins."

Lady Ella was doubtful about Zeppelins. Thrice they had been right over Hunstanton already. They came in by the easy landmark of the Wash.

"It will interest him," said Eleanor, who knew her father better.

§ 2

One warm and still and sunny afternoon the bishop found himself looking out upon the waters of the Wash. He sat where the highest pebble layers of the beach reached up to a little cliff of sandy earth perhaps a foot high, and he looked upon sands and sea and sky and saw that they were beautiful.

He was a dark black-gaitered object in a scene of the most exquisite and delicate colour. Right and left of him stretched the low grey salted shore, pale banks of marly earth surmounted by green-grey wiry grass that held and was half buried in fine blown sand. Above, the heavens made a complete hemi-

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sphere of blue in which a series of remote cumulus clouds floated and dissolved. Before him spread the long levels of the sands, and far away at its utmost ebb was the sea. Eleanor had gone to explore the black ribs of a wrecked fishing-boat that lay at the edge of a shallow lagoon. She was a pink-footed figure, very bright and apparently transparent. She had reverted for a time to shameless childishness; she had hidden her stockings among the reeds of the bank, and she was running to and fro, from starfish to razor shell and from cockle to weed. The shingle was pale drab and purple close at hand, but to the westward, towards Hunstanton, the sands became brown and purple, and were presently broken up into endless skerries of low flat weed-covered boulders and little intensely blue pools. The sea was a band of sapphire that became silver to the west; it met the silver shining sands in one delicate breathing edge of brilliantly white foam. Remote to the west, very small and black and clear against the afternoon sky, was a cart, and about it was a score or so of mussel-gatherers. Nearer, on an apparently empty stretch of shining wet sand, a multitude of gulls was mysteriously busy. These two groups of activities and Eleanor's flitting translucent movements did but set off and emphasise the immense and soothing tranquillity.

For a long time the bishop sat passively receptive to this healing beauty. Then a flow of thought began and gathered in his mind. He had come out to think over two letters that he had brought with him. He drew these now rather reluctantly from his pocket,

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§ 1

THAT night the bishop had a temperature of a hundred and a half. The doctor pronounced him to be in a state of intense mental excitement, aggravated by some drug. He was a doctor modern and clear-minded enough to admit that he could not identify the drug. He overruled, every one overruled, the bishop's declaration that he had done with the church, that he could never mock God with his episcopal ministrations again, that he must proceed at once with his resignation. "Don't think of these things," said the doctor. "Banish them from your mind until your temperature is down to ninety-eight. Then after a rest you may go into them."

Lady Ella insisted upon his keeping his room. It was with difficulty that he got her to admit Whippam, and Whippam was exasperatingly in order. "You need not trouble about anything now, my lord," he said. "Everything will keep until you are ready to attend to it. It's well we're through with Easter. Bishop Buncombe of Eastern Blowdesia was coming here anyhow. And there is Canon Bliss. There's only two ordination candidates because of the war. We'll get on swimmingly."

The bishop thought he would like to talk to those two ordination candidates, but they prevailed upon

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and after a long pause over the envelopes began to read them.

He reread Likeman's letter first.

Likeman could not forgive him.

"My dear Scrope," he wrote, "your explanation explains nothing. This sensational declaration of infidelity to our mother church, made under the most damning and distressing circumstances in the presence of young and tender minds intrusted to your ministrations, and in defiance of the honourable engagements implied in the confirmation service, confirms my worst apprehensions of the weaknesses of your character. I have always felt the touch of theatricality in your temperament, the peculiar craving to be pseudo-deeper, pseudo-simpler than us all, the need of personal excitement. I know that you were never quite contented to believe in God at second-hand. You wanted to be taken notice of—personally. Except for some few hints to you, I have never breathed a word of these doubts to any human being; I have always hoped that the ripening that comes with years and experience would give you an increasing strength against the dangers of emotionalism and against your strong, deep, quiet sense of your exceptional personal importance. . . ."

The bishop read thus far, and then sat reflecting. Was it just?

He had many weaknesses, but had he this egotism? No; that wasn't the justice of the case. The old man, bitterly disappointed, was endeavouring to wound. Scrope asked himself whether he was to blame for that disappointment. That was a more difficult question. . . .

He dismissed the charge at last, crumpled up the letter in his hand, and after a moment's hesitation flung it away. . . . But he remained acutely sorry,

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what a wonderful, *wonderful* phrase that is. It says everything. Tell us more of him and more. Count me first—*not foremost*, but just the little one that runs in first—among your disciples. They say you are resigning your position in the church. Of course that must be true. You are coming out of it—what did you call it?—coming out of the *cracked old vessel* from which you have poured the living waters. I called on Lady Ella yesterday. She did not tell me very much; I think she is a very reserved as well as a very dignified woman, but she said that you intended to go to London. In London then I suppose you will set up the first altar to the *Divine King*. *I want to help.*

“Dear Bishop and Teacher, I want to help *tremendously*—with all my heart and all my soul. I want to be let do things for you.” (The “you” was erased by three or four rapid slashes, and “*our King*” substituted.) “I want to be privileged to help build that First Church of the World Unified under God. It is a dreadful thing to say, but, you see, I am very rich; this dreadful war has made me ever so much richer—*steel* and *shipping* and things—it is my trustees have done it. I am ashamed to be so rich. I want to give. I want to give and help this great beginning of yours. I want you to let me help on the *temporal* side, to make it easy for you to stand forth and deliver your message, amidst suitable surroundings and *without any horrid worries on account of the sacrifices you have made*. Please do not turn my offering aside. I have never wanted anything so much in all my life as I want to make this gift. Unless I can make it I feel that for me there is *no salvation!* I shall stick with my loads and loads of stocks and shares and horrid possessions outside the *Needle’s Eye*. But if I could build a temple for God, and just live somewhere near it so as to be the poor woman who sweeps out the chapels, and die perhaps and be buried under its floor! Don’t smile at me. *I mean every word of it.* Years ago I thought of such a thing. After I had visited the Certosa di Pavia—do you know it? So beautiful, and those two still alabaster figures—recumbent. But until now I could never see my way to any such service. Now I do. I am all afire to do it. Help me! Tell me! Let me stand behind you

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and make your mission *possible*. I feel I have come to the most wonderful phase in my life. I feel my call has come. . . .

"I have written this letter over three times, and torn each of them up. I do so want to say all this, and it is so desperately hard to say. I am full of fears that you despise me. I know there is a sort of *high colour* about me. My passion for brightness. I am absurd. But inside of me is a soul, a *real, living, breathing soul*. Crying out to you: 'Oh, let me help! Let me help!' I will do anything, I will endure anything if only I can keep hold of the *vision splendid* you gave me in the cathedral. I see it now day and night, the dream of the place I can make for you—and *you preaching!* My fingers itch to begin. The day before yesterday I said to myself, 'I am quite unworthy, I am a worldly woman, a rich, smart, decorated woman. He will never accept me as I am.' I took off all my jewels, every one, I looked through all my clothes, and at last I decided I would have made for me a very simple straight grey dress, just simple and straight and grey. Perhaps you will think that too is absurd of me, too self-conscious. I would not tell of it to you if I did not want you to understand how *alive* I am to my *utter impossibilities*, how resolved I am to do anything so that I may be able to *serve*. But never mind about silly *me*; let me tell you how I see the new church.

"I think you ought to have some place near the centre of London; not too *west*, for you might easily become *fashionable*, not too *east* because you might easily be swallowed up in *merely philanthropic* work, but somewhere between the two. There must be vacant sites still to be got round about *Kingsway*. And there we must set up your *tabernacle*, a very plain, very simple, very *beautifully proportioned* building in which you can give your message. I know a young man, just the very young man to do something of the sort, something quite new, quite modern, and yet solemn and serious. Lady Ella seemed to think you wanted to live somewhere in the north-west of London—but she would tell me very little. I seem to see you not there at all, not in anything between west-end and suburb, but yourself as central as your mind, in a kind of clergy house

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that will be part of the building. That is how it is in my dream anyhow. All that though can be settled afterwards. My imagination and my desire is running away with me. It is no time yet for *premature plans*. Not that I am not planning day and night. This letter is simply to offer. I just want to offer. Here I am and all my worldly goods. Take me, I pray you. And not only pray you. Take me, I demand of you, in the name of God our King. I have a *right* to be used. And you have no right to refuse me. You have to go on with your message, and it is your duty to take me—just as you are obliged to step on any stepping-stone that lies on your way to do God service. . . . And so I am waiting. I shall be waiting—on thorns. I know you will take your time and think. But do not take too much time. Think of me waiting.

“Your servant, your most humble helper in God (*your* God),
AGATHA SUNDERBUND.”

And then scrawled along the margin of the last sheet:

“If, when you know—a telegram, Even if you cannot say so much as ‘Agreed,’ still such a word as ‘Favourable.’ I just hang over the Void until I hear.

AGATHA S.”

A letter demanding enormous deliberation. She argued closely in spite of her italics. It had never dawned upon the bishop before how light is the servitude of the disciple in comparison with the servitude of the master. In many ways this proposal repelled and troubled him, in many ways it attracted him. And the argument of his clear obligation to accept her co-operation gripped him; it was a good argument.

And besides it worked in very conveniently with certain other difficulties that perplexed him.

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§ 4

The bishop became aware that Eleanor was returning to him across the sands. She had made an end to her paddling, she had put on her shoes and stockings and become once more the grave and responsible young woman who had been taking care of him since his flight from Princhester. He replaced the letter in his pocket, and sat ready to smile as she drew near; he admired her open brow, the toss of her hair, and the poise of her head upon her neck. It was good to note that her hard reading at Cambridge hadn't bent her shoulders in the least. . . .

"Well, old Dad!" she said as she drew near. "You've got back a colour."

"I've got back everything. It's time I returned to Princhester."

"Not in this weather. Not for a day or so." She flung herself at his feet. "Consider your overworked little daughter. Oh, how *good* this is!"

"No," said the bishop in a grave tone that made her look up into his face. "I must go back."

He met her clear gaze. "What do you think of all this business, Eleanor?" he asked abruptly. "Do *you* think I had a sort of fit in the cathedral?"

He winced as he asked the question.

"Daddy," she said, after a short pause; "the things you said and did that afternoon were the noblest you ever did in your life. I wish I had been there. It must have been splendid to be there. I've not told you before— I've been dying to. . . . I'd promised not to say a word—not to remind you. I promised

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the doctor. But now you ask me, now you are well again, I can tell you. Kitty Kingdom has told me all about it, how it felt. It was like light and order coming into a hopeless dark muddle. What you said was like what we have all been trying to think—I mean all of us young people. Suddenly it was all clear.”

She stopped short. She was breathless with the excitement of her confession.

Her father too remained silent for a little while. He was reminded of his weakness; he was, he perceived, still a little hysterical. He felt that he might weep at her youthful enthusiasm if he did not restrain himself.

“I’m glad,” he said, and patted her shoulder. “I’m glad, Norah.”

She looked away from him out across the lank brown sands and water pools to the sea. “It was what we have all been feeling our way towards, the absolute simplification of religion, the absolute simplification of politics and social duty; just God, just God the King.”

“But should I have said that—in the cathedral?”

She felt no scruples. “You *had* to,” she said.

“But now think what it means,” he said. “I must leave the church.”

“As a man strips off his coat for a fight.”

“That doesn’t dismay you?”

She shook her head, and smiled confidently to sea and sky.

“I’m glad if you’re with me,” he said. “Sometimes—I think—I’m not a very self-reliant man.”

“You’ll have all the world with you,” she was convinced, “in no time.”

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"Perhaps rather a longer time than you think, Norah. In the meantime——"

She turned to him once more.

"In the meantime there are a great many things to consider. Young people, they say, never think of the transport that is needed to win a battle. I have it in my mind that I should leave the church. But I can't just walk out into the market-place and begin preaching there. I see the family furniture being carried out of the palace and put into vans. It has to go somewhere. . . ."

"I suppose you will go to London."

"Possibly. In fact certainly. I have a plan. Or at least an opportunity. . . . But that isn't what I have most in mind. These things are not done without emotion and a considerable strain upon one's personal relationships. I do not think this— I do not think your mother sees things as we do."

"She will," said young enthusiasm, "when she understands."

"I wish she did. But I have been unlucky in the circumstances of my explanations to her. And of course you understand all this means risks—poverty perhaps—going without things—travel, opportunity, nice possessions—for all of us. A loss of position too. All this sort of thing," he stuck out a gaitered calf and smiled, "will have to go. People, some of them, may be disagreeable to us. . . ."

"After all, Daddy," she said smiling, "it isn't so bad as the cross and the lions and burning pitch. And you have the Truth."

"You do believe—?" He left his sentence unfinished.

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She nodded, her face aglow. "We know you have the Truth."

"Of course in my own mind now it is very clear. I had a kind of illumination. . . ." He would have tried to tell her of his vision, and he was too shy. "It came to me suddenly that the whole world was in confusion because men followed after a thousand different immediate aims, when really it was quite easy, if only one could be simple it was quite easy, to show that nearly all men could only be fully satisfied and made happy in themselves by one single aim, which was also the aim that would make the whole world one great order, and that aim was to make God King of one's heart and the whole world. I saw that all this world, except for a few base monstrous spirits, was suffering hideous things because of this war, and before the war it was full of folly, waste, social injustice, and suspicion for the same reason, because it had not realised the kingship of God. And that is so simple; the essence of God is simplicity. The sin of this war lies with men like myself, men who set up to tell people about God, more than it lies with any other class——"

"Kings?" she interjected, "Diplomatists? Finance?"

"Yes. Those men could only work mischief in the world because the priests and teachers let them. All things human lie at last at the door of the priest and teacher. Who differentiate, who qualify and complicate, who make mean unnecessary elaborations, and so divide mankind. If it were not for the weakness and wickedness of the priests, every one would know

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and understand God. Every one who was modest enough not to set up for particular knowledge. Men disputed whether God is Finite or Infinite, whether he has a triple or a single aspect. How should they know? All we need to know is the face he turns to us. They impose their horrible creeds and distinctions. None of those things matter. Call him Christ the God or call him simply God, Allah, Heaven; it does not matter. He comes to us, we know, like a Helper and Friend; that is all we want to know. You may speculate further if you like, but it is not religion. They dispute whether he can set aside nature. But that is superstition. He is either master of nature and he knows that it is good, or he is part of nature and must obey. That is an argument for hair-splitting metaphysicians. Either answer means the same for us. It does not matter which way we come to believe that he does not idly set the course of things aside. Obviously he does not set the course of things aside. What he does do for certain is to give us courage and save us from our selfishness and the bitter hell it makes for us. And every one knows too what sort of things we want, and for what end we want to escape from ourselves. We want to do right. And right, if you think clearly, is just truth within and service without, the service of God's kingdom, which is mankind, the service of human needs and the increase of human power and experience. It is all perfectly plain, it is all quite easy for any one to understand who isn't misled and chattered at and threatened and poisoned by evil priests and teachers."

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"And you are going to preach that, Daddy?"

"If I can. When I am free—you know I have still to resign and give up—I shall make that my message."

"And so God comes."

"God comes as men perceive him in his simplicity. . . . Let men but see God simply, and forthwith God and his kingdom possess the world."

She looked out to sea in silence for a while.

Then she turned to her father. "And you think that his Kingdom will come—perhaps in quite a short time—perhaps in our lifetimes? And that all these ridiculous or wicked little kings and emperors, and these political parties, and these policies and conspiracies, and this nationalist nonsense and all the patriotism and rowdyism, all the private profit-seeking and every baseness in life, all the things that it is so horrible and disgusting to be young among and powerless among, you think they will fade before him?"

The bishop pulled his faith together.

"They will fade before him—but whether it will take a lifetime or a hundred lifetimes or a thousand lifetimes, my Norah——"

He smiled and left his sentence unfinished, and she smiled back at him to show she understood.

And then he confessed further, because he did not want to seem merely sentimentally hopeful.

"When I was in the cathedral, Norah—and just before that service, it seemed to me—it was very real. . . . It seemed that perhaps the Kingdom of God is nearer than we suppose, that it needs but the

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faith and courage of a few, and it may be that we may even live to see the dawning of his kingdom, even—who knows?—the sunrise. I am so full of faith and hope that I fear to be too hopeful with you. But whether it is near or far——”

“We work for it,” said Eleanor.

Eleanor thought, eyes downcast, and then looked up.

“It is so wonderful to talk to you like this, Daddy. In the old days, I didn’t dream— Before I went to Newnham. I misjudged you. I thought— Never mind what I thought. It was silly. But now I am so proud of you. And so happy to be back with you, Daddy, and find that your religion is after all just the same religion that I have been wanting.”

CHAPTER THE NINTH

THE THIRD VISION

§ 1

ONE afternoon in October, four months and more after that previous conversation, the card of Mr. Edward Scrope was brought up to Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey. The name awakened no memories. The doctor descended to discover a man so obviously in unaccustomed plain clothes that he had a momentary disagreeable idea that he was facing a detective. Then he saw that this secular disguise draped the familiar form of his old friend, the former Bishop of Princhester. Scrope was pale and rather untidy; he had already acquired something of the peculiar, slightly faded quality one finds in a don who has gone to Hampstead and fallen amongst advanced thinkers and got mixed up with the Fabian Society. His anxious eyes and faintly propitiatory manner suggested an impending appeal.

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey had the *savoir-faire* of a successful consultant; he prided himself on being all things to all men; but just for an instant he was at a loss what sort of thing he had to be here. Then he adopted the genial, kindly, but by no means lavishly generous tone advisable in the case of a man who has suffered considerable social deterioration without being very seriously to blame.

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Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey was a round-faced man with defective eyesight and an unsuitable nose for the glasses he wore, and he flaunted—God knows why—enormous side-whiskers.

“Well,” he said, balancing the glasses skilfully by throwing back his head, “and how are you? And what can I do for you? There’s no external evidence of trouble. You’re looking lean and pale, but thoroughly fit.”

“Yes,” said the late bishop, “I’m fairly fit——”

“Only—?” said the doctor, smiling his teeth, with something of the manner of an old bathing woman who tells a child to jump.

“Well, I’m run down and—worried.”

“We’d better sit down,” said the great doctor professionally, and looked hard at him. Then he pulled at the arm of a chair.

The ex-bishop sat down, and the doctor placed himself between his patient and the light.

“This business of resigning my bishopric and so forth has involved very considerable strains,” Scrope began. “That I think is the essence of the trouble. One cuts so many associations. . . . I did not realise how much feeling there would be. . . . Difficulties too of readjusting one’s position.”

“Zactly. Zactly. Zactly,” said the doctor, snapping his face and making his glasses vibrate. “Run down. Want a tonic or a change?”

“Yes. In fact—I want a particular tonic.”

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey made his eyes and mouth round and interrogative.

“While you were away last spring——”

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"*Had* to go," said the doctor, "unavoidable. Gas gangrene. Certain inquiries. These young investigators all very well in their way. But we older reputations— Experience. Maturity of judgment. Can't do without us. Yes?"

"Well, I came here last spring and saw, an assistant I suppose he was, or a supply,—do you call them supplies in your profession?—named, I think— Let me see—D——?"

"*Dale!*"

The doctor as he uttered this word set his face to the unaccustomed exercise of expressing malignity. His round blue eyes sought to blaze, small cherubic muscles exerted themselves to pucker his brows. His colour became a violent pink. "Lunatic!" he said. "Dangerous Lunatic! He didn't do anything—anything bad in your case, did he?"

He was evidently highly charged with grievance in this matter. "That man was sent to me from Cambridge with the highest testimonials. The very highest. I had to go at twenty-four hours' notice. Inquiry—gas gangrene. There was nothing for it but to leave things in his hands."

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey disavowed responsibility with an open, stumpy-fingered hand.

"He did me no particular harm," said Scrope.

"You are the first he spared," said Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey.

"Did he—? Was he unskilful?"

"Unskilful is hardly the word."

"Were his methods peculiar?"

The little doctor sprang to his feet and began to

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pace about the room. "Peculiar!" he said. "It was abominable that they should send him to me. Abominable!"

He turned, with all the round knobs that constituted his face, aglow. His side-whiskers waved apart like wings about to flap. He protruded his face towards his seated patient. "I am glad that he has been killed," he said. "*Glad! There!*"

His glasses fell off—shocked beyond measure. He did not heed them. They swung about in front of him as if they sought to escape while he poured out his feelings.

"Fool!" he spluttered with demonstrative gestures. "Dangerous fool! His one idea—to upset everybody. Drugs, sir! The most terrible drugs! I come back. Find ladies. High social position. Morphinomaniacs. Others. Reckless use of the most dangerous expedients. . . . Cocaine not in it. Stimulants—violent stimulants. In the highest quarters. Terrible. *Exalted* persons. *Royalty!* Anxious to be given war work and become anonymous. . . . Horrible! He's been a terrible influence. One idea—to disturb soul and body. Minds unhinged. Personal relations deranged. Shattered the practice of years. The harm he has done! The harm!"

He looked as though he was trying to burst—as a final expression of wrath. He failed. His hands felt trembling to recover his pince-nez. Then from his tail pocket he produced a large silk handkerchief and wiped the glasses. Replaced them. Wiggled his head in his collar, running his fingers round his neck. Patted his tie.

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"Excuse this outbreak!" he said. "But Dr. Dale has inflicted injuries——"

Scrope got up, walked slowly to the window, clasping his hands behind his back, and turned. His manner still retained much of his episcopal dignity. "I am sorry. But still you can no doubt tell from your books what it was he gave me. It was a tonic that had a very great effect on me. And I need it badly now."

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey was quietly malignant. "He kept no diary at all," he said. "No diary at all."

"But——"

"If he did," said Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey holding up a flat hand and wagging it from side to side, "I wouldn't follow his treatment." He intensified with the hand going faster. "I wouldn't follow his treatment. Not under any circumstances."

"Naturally," said Scrope, "if the results are what you say. But in my case it wasn't a treatment. I was sleepless, confused in my mind, wretched and demoralised; I came here, and he just produced the stuff— It clears the head, it clears the mind. One seems to get away from the cloud of things, to get through to essentials and fundamentals. It straightened me out. . . . You must know such a stuff. Just now, confronted with all sorts of problems arising out of my resignation, I want that tonic effect again. I *must* have it. I have matters to decide—and I can't decide. I find myself uncertain, changeable from hour to hour. I don't ask you to take up anything of this man Dale's. This is a new occasion. But I want that drug."

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At the beginning of this speech Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey's hands had fallen to his hips. As Scrope went on the doctor's pose had stiffened. His head had gone a little on one side; he had begun to play with his glasses. At the end he gave vent to one or two short coughs, and then pointed his words with his glasses held out.

"Tell me," he said, "tell me." (Cough.) "Had this drug that cleared your head—anything to do with your resignation?"

And he put on his glasses disconcertingly, and threw his head back to watch the reply.

"It did help to clear up the situation."

"Exactly," said Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey in a tone that defined his own position with remorseless clearness. "Exactly." And he held up a flat, arresting hand. . . .

"My dear sir," he said. "How can you expect me to help you to a drug so disastrous?—even if I could tell you what it is."

"But it was not disastrous to me," said Scrope.

"Your extraordinary resignation—your still more extraordinary way of proclaiming it!"

"I don't think those were disasters."

"But my *dear* sir!"

"You don't want to discuss theology with me, I know. So let me tell you simply that from my point of view the illumination that came to me—this drug of Dr. Dale's helping—has been the great release of my life. It crystallised my mind. It swept aside the confusing commonplace things about me. Just for a time I saw truth clearly. . . . I want to do so again."

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"Why?"

"There is a crisis in my affairs—never mind what. But I cannot see my way clear."

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey was meditating now with his eyes on his carpet and the corners of his mouth tucked in. He was swinging his glasses pendulum-wise. "Tell me," he said, looking sideways at Scrope, "what were the effects of this drug? It may have been anything. How did it give you this—this vision of the truth—that led to your resignation?"

Scrope felt a sudden shyness. But he wanted Dale's drug again so badly that he obliged himself to describe his previous experiences to the best of his ability.

"It was," he said in a matter-of-fact tone, "a golden, transparent liquid. Very golden, like a warm-tinted Chablis. When water was added it became streaked and opalescent, with a kind of living quiver in it. I held it up to the light."

"Yes? And when you took it?"

"I felt suddenly clearer. My mind— I had a kind of exaltation and assurance."

"Your mind," Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey assisted, "began to go twenty-nine to the dozen."

"It felt stronger and clearer," said Scrope, sticking to his quest.

"And did things look as usual?" asked the doctor, protruding his knobby little face like a clinched fist.

"No," said Scrope, and regarded him. How much was it possible to tell a man of this type?

"They differed?" said the doctor, relaxing.

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"Yes. . . . Well, to be plain. . . . I had an immediate sense of God. I saw the world—as if it were a transparent curtain, and then God became—evident. . . . Is it possible for that to determine the drug?"

"God became—evident," the doctor said with some distaste, and shook his head slowly. Then in a sudden sharp cross-examining tone: "You mean you had a vision? Act'uly saw 'um?"

"It was in the form of a vision." Scrope was now mentally very uncomfortable indeed.

The doctor's lips repeated these words noiselessly, with an effect of contempt. "He must have given you something— It's a little like morphia. But golden—opalescent? And it was this vision made you astonish us all with your resignation?"

"That was part of a larger process," said Scrope patiently. "I had been drifting into a complete repudiation of the Anglican positions long before that. All that this drug did was to make clear what was already in my mind. And give it *value*. Act as a developer."

The doctor suddenly gave way to a botryoidal hilarity. "To think that one should be consulted about visions of God—in Mount Street!" he said. "And you know, you know you half want to believe that vision was real. You *know* you do."

So far Scrope had been resisting his realisation of failure. Now he gave way to an exasperation that made him reckless of Brighton-Pomfrey's opinion. "I do think," he said, "that that drug did in some way make God real to me. I think I saw God."

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Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey shook his head in a way that made Scrope want to hit him.

"I think I saw God," he repeated more firmly. "I had a sudden realisation of how great he was and how great life was, and how timid and mean and sordid were all our genteel, professional lives. I was seized upon, for a time I was altogether possessed by a passion to serve him fitly and recklessly, to make an end to compromises with comfort and self-love and secondary things. And I want to hold to that. I want to get back to that. I am given to lassitudes. I relax. I am by temperament an easy-going man. I want to buck myself up, I want to get on with my larger purposes, and I find myself tired, muddled, entangled. . . . The drug was a good thing. For me it was a good thing. I want its help again."

"I know no more than you do what it was."

"Are there no other drugs that you do know, that have a kindred effect? If for example I tried morphia in some form?"

"You'd get visions. They wouldn't be divine visions. If you took small quantities very discreetly you might get a *temporary* quickening. But the swift result of all repeated drug-taking is, I can assure you, moral decay—rapid moral decay. To touch drugs habitually is to become hopelessly unpunctual, untruthful, callously selfish and insincere. I am talking mere text-book, mere every-day commonplaces, when I tell you that."

"I had an idea. I had a hope. . . ."

"You've a stiff enough fight before you," said the doctor, "without such a handicap as that."

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“You won’t help me?”

The doctor walked up and down his hearth-rug, and then delivered himself with an extended hand and waggling fingers.

“I wouldn’t if I could. For your good I wouldn’t. And even if I would I couldn’t, for I don’t know the drug. One of his infernal brews, no doubt. Something—accidental. It’s lost—for good—for *your* good, anyhow. . . .”

§ 2

Scrope halted outside the stucco portals of the doctor’s house. He hesitated whether he should turn to the east or the west.

“That door closes,” he said. “There’s no getting back *that* way. . . .”

He stood for a time on the kerb. He turned at last towards Park Lane and Hyde Park. He walked along thoughtfully, inattentively steering a course for his new home in Pembury Road, Notting Hill.

§ 3

At the outset of this new phase in Scrope’s life that had followed the crisis of the confirmation service, everything had seemed very clear before him. He believed firmly that he had been shown God, that he had himself stood in the presence of God, and that there had been a plain call to him to proclaim God to the world. He had realised God, and it was the task of every one who had realised God to help all

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mankind to the same realisation. The proposal of Lady Sunderbund had fallen in with that idea. He had been steeling himself to a prospect of struggle and dire poverty, but her prompt loyalty had come as an immense relief to his anxiety for his wife and family. When he had talked to Eleanor upon the beach at Hunstanton it had seemed to him that his course was manifest, perhaps a little severe but by no means impossible. They had sat together in the sunshine, exalted by a sense of fine adventure and confident of success, they had looked out upon the future, upon the great near future in which the idea of God was to inspire and reconstruct the world.

It was only very slowly that this pristine clearness became clouded and confused. It had not been so easy as Eleanor had supposed to win over the sympathy of Lady Ella with his resignation. Indeed it had not been won over. She had become a stern and chilling companion, mute now upon the issue of his resignation, but manifestly resentful. He was secretly disappointed and disconcerted by her tone. And the same hesitation of the mind, instinctive rather than reasoned, that had prevented a frank explanation of his earlier doubts to her, now restrained him from telling her naturally and at once of the part that Lady Sunderbund was to play in his future ministry. In his own mind he felt assured about that part, but in order to excuse his delay in being frank with his wife, he told himself that he was not as yet definitely committed to Lady Sunderbund's project. And in accordance with that idea he set up housekeeping in London upon a scale that implied a very complete

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cessation of income. "As yet," he told Lady Ella, "we do not know where we stand. For a time we must not so much house ourselves as camp. We must take some quite small and modest house in some less expensive district. If possible I would like to take it for a year, until we know better how things are with us."

He reviewed a choice of London districts.

Lady Ella said her bitterest thing. "Does it matter where we hide our heads?"

That wrung him to: "We are *not* hiding our heads."

She repented at once. "I am sorry, Ted," she said. "It slipped from me. . . ."

He called it camping, but the house they had found in Pembury Road, Notting Hill, was more darkened and less airy than any camp. Neither he nor his wife had ever had any experience of middle-class house-hunting or middle-class housekeeping before, and they spent three of the most desolating days of their lives in looking for this cheap and modest shelter for their household possessions. Hitherto life had moved them from one established and comfortable home to another; their worst affliction had been the modern decorations of the Palace at Princeschester, and it was altogether a revelation to them to visit house after house such as harbour the respectable middle classes of London, ill-lit, ill-planned, with dingy paint and peeling wallpaper, kitchens for the most part underground, and either without bathrooms or with built-out bathrooms that were manifestly grudging afterthoughts. The house agents, perceiving intimations of helplessness in their manner, adopted a "rushing"

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method with them strange to people who had hitherto lived in a glowing halo of episcopal dignity. "Take it or leave it," was the note of those gentlemen; "there are always people ready for houses." The line that property in land and houses takes in England, the ex-bishop realised, is always to hold up and look scornful. The position of the land-owning, house-owning class in a crowded country like England is ultraregal. It is under no obligation to be of use, and people are obliged to get down to the land somewhere. They cannot conduct business and rear families in the air. England's necessity is the landlord's opportunity. . . .

Scrope began to generalise about this, and develop a new and sincerer streak of socialism in his ideas. "The church has been very remiss," he said, as he and Lady Ella stared at the basement "breakfast-room" of their twenty-seventh dismal possibility. "It should have insisted far more than it has done upon the landlord's responsibility. No one should tolerate the offer of such a house as this—at such a rent—to decent people. It is unrighteous."

At the house agent's he asked in a cold, intelligent ruling-class voice the name of the offending landlord.

"It's all the property of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners that side of the railway," said the agent, picking his teeth with a pin. "Lazy lot. Dreadfully hard to get 'em to do anything. Own some of the worst properties in London."

Lady Ella saw things differently again. "If you had stayed in the church," she said afterwards, "you might have helped to alter such things as that."

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At the time he had no answer.

"But," he said presently as they went back in the tube to their modest Bloomsbury hotel, "if I had stayed in the church I should never have known about things like that."

§ 4

But it does no justice to Lady Ella to record these two unavoidable expressions of regret without telling also of the rallying courage with which she presently took over the task of resettling herself and her stricken family. Her husband's change of opinion had fallen upon her out of a clear sky, without any premonition, in one tremendous day. In one day there had come clamouring upon her, with an effect of revelation after revelation, the ideas of drugs, of heresy and blasphemy, of an alien feminine influence, of the entire moral and material breakdown of the man who had been the centre of her life. Never was the whole world of a woman so swiftly and comprehensively smashed. All the previous troubles of her life seemed infinitesimal in comparison with any single item in this dismaying débâcle. She tried to consolidate it in the idea that he was ill, "disordered." She assured herself that he would return from Hunstanton restored to health and orthodoxy, with all his threatenings of a resignation recalled; the man she had loved and trusted to succeed in the world and to do right always according to her ideas. It was only with extreme reluctance that she faced the fact that with the fumes of the drug dispelled and all

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signs of nervous exhaustion gone, he still pressed quietly but resolutely toward a severance from the church. She tried to argue with him and she found she could not argue. The church was a crystal sphere in which her life was wholly contained, her mind could not go outside it even to consider a dissentient proposition.

While he was at Hunstanton, every day she had prayed for an hour, some days she had prayed for several hours, in the cathedral, kneeling upon a harsh hassock that hurt her knees. Even in her prayers she could not argue nor vary. She prayed over and over again many hundreds of times: "Bring him back, dear Lord. Bring him back again."

In the past he had always been a very kind and friendly mate to her, but sometimes he had been irritable about small things, especially during his seasons of insomnia; now he came back changed, a much graver man, rather older in his manner, carefully attentive to her, kinder and more watchful, at times astonishingly apologetic, but rigidly set upon his purpose of leaving the church. "I know you do not think with me in this," he said. "I have to pray you to be patient with me. I have struggled with my conscience. . . . For a time it means hardship, I know. Poverty. But if you will trust me I think I shall be able to pull through. There are ways of doing my work. Perhaps we shall not have to undergo this cramping in this house for very long. . . ."

"It is not the poverty I fear," said Lady Ella.

And she did face the worldly situation, if a little sadly, at any rate with the courage of practical

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energy. It was she who stood in one ungainly house after another and schemed how to make discomforts tolerable, while Scrope raged unhelpfully at landlordism and the responsibility of the church for economic disorder. It was she who at last took decisions into her hands when he was too jaded to do anything but generalise weakly, and settled upon the house in Pembury Road which became their London home. She got him to visit Hunstanton again for half a week while she and Miriam, who was the practical genius of the family, moved in and made the new home presentable. At the best it was barely presentable. There were many plain hardships. The girls had to share one of the chief bedrooms in common instead of their jolly little individual dens at Princhester. One small room was all that could be squeezed out as a study for "father", it was not really a separate room, it was merely cut off by closed folding doors from the dining-room, folding doors that slowly transmitted the dinner flavours to a sensitive worker; and its window looked out upon a blackened and uneventful yard and the skylights of a populous, conversational, and high-spirited millinery establishment that had been built over the corresponding garden of the house in Restharrow Street. Lady Ella had this room lined with open shelves, and Clementina (in the absence of Eleanor at Newnham) arranged the pick of her father's books. It is to be noted as a fact of psychological interest that this cramped, ill-lit little room distressed Lady Ella more than any other of the discomforts of their new quarters. The bishop's writing-desk filled a whole side of it. Parsimony ruled her

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mind, but she could not resist the impulse to get him at least a seemly reading-lamp.

He came back from Hunstanton full of ideas for work in London. He was, he thought, going to "write something" about his views. He was very grateful and much surprised at what she had done to that forbidding house, and full of hints and intimations that it would not be long before they moved to roomier quarters. She was disposed to seek some sort of salaried employment for Clementina and Miriam at least, but he would not hear of that. "They must go on and get educated," he said, "if I have to give up smoking to do it. Perhaps I may manage even without that." Eleanor, it seemed, had a good prospect of a scholarship at the London School of Economics that would practically keep her. There would be no Cambridge for Clementina, but London University might still be possible with a little pinching, and the move to London had really improved the prospects of a good musical training for Miriam. Phoebe and Daphne, Lady Ella believed, might get in on special terms at the Notting Hill High School.

Scrope found it difficult to guess at what was going on in the heads of his younger daughters. None displayed such sympathy as Eleanor had confessed. He had a feeling that his wife had schooled them to say nothing about the change in their fortunes to him. But they quarrelled a good deal, he could hear, about the use of the one bathroom—there was never enough hot water after the second bath. And Miriam did not seem to enjoy playing the new upright piano in the drawing-room as much as she had done the Prin-

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chester grand it replaced. Though she was always willing to play that thing he liked—he knew now that it was the Adagio of Op. 111—whenever he asked for it.

London servants, Lady Ella found, were now much more difficult to get than they had been in the Holy Innocents' days in St. John's Wood. And more difficult to manage when they were got. The households of the more prosperous clergy are much sought after by domestics of a serious and excellent type; an unfrocked clergyman's household is by no means so attractive. The first comers were young women of unfortunate dispositions; the first cook was reluctant and insolent, she went before her month was up; the second careless; she burned potatoes and cindered chops, under-boiled and over-boiled eggs; gave a "dropped" look to everything, harsh coffee and bitter tea seemed to be a natural aspect of the state of being no longer a bishop. He would often after a struggle with his nerves in the bedroom come humming cheerfully to breakfast, to find that Phœbe, who was a delicate eater, had pushed her plate away scarcely touched, while Lady Ella sat at the end of the table in a state of dangerous calm, framing comments for delivering down-stairs that would be sure to sting and yet leave no opening for repartee, and trying at the same time to believe that a third cook, if the chances were risked again, would certainly be "all right."

The drawing-room was papered with a morose wallpaper that the landlord, in view of the fact that Scrope in his optimism would only take the house on

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a yearly agreement, had refused to replace; it was a design of very dark green leaves and grey gothic arches; and the apartment was lit by a chandelier, which spilled a pool of light in the centre of the room and splashed useless weak patches elsewhere. Lady Ella had to interfere to prevent the monopolisation of this centre by Phoebe and Daphne for their home work. This light trouble was difficult to arrange; the plain truth was that there was not enough illumination to go round. In the Princhester drawing-room there had been a number of obliging electric pushes. The size of the dining-room, now that the study was cut off from it, forbade hospitality. As it was, with only the family at home, the housemaid made it a grievance that she could scarcely squeeze by on the sideboard side to wait.

The house vibrated to the trains in the adjacent underground railway. There was a lady next door but one who was very pluckily training a contralto voice that most people would have gladly thrown away. At the end of Restharrow Street was a garage, and a yard where chauffeurs were accustomed to "tune up" their engines. All these facts were persistently audible to any one sitting down in the little back study to think out this project of "writing something," about a change in the government of the whole world. Petty inconveniences no doubt all these inconveniences were, but they distressed a rather oversensitive mind which was also acutely aware that even upon this scale living would cost certainly two hundred and fifty pounds if not more in excess of the private income available.

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§ 5

These domestic details, irrelevant as they may seem in a spiritual history, need to be given because they added an intimate keenness to Scrope's readiness for this private-chapel enterprise that he was discussing with Lady Sunderbund. Along that line, and along that line alone, he saw the way of escape from the great sea of London dinginess that threatened to submerge his family. And it was also, he felt, the line of his duty; it was his "call."

At least that was how he felt at first. And then matters began to grow complicated again. . . .

Things had gone far between himself and Lady Sunderbund since that letter he had read upon the beach at Old Hunstanton. The blinds of the house with the very very blue door in Princhester had been drawn from the day when the first van-load of the renegade bishop's private possessions had departed from the palace. The lady had returned to the brightly decorated flat overlooking Hyde Park. He had seen her repeatedly since then, and always with a fairly clear understanding that she was to provide the chapel and pulpit in which he was to proclaim to London the gospel of the Simplicity and Universality of God. He was to be the prophet of a reconsidered faith, calling the whole world from creeds and sects, from egotisms and vain loyalties, from prejudices of race and custom, to the worship and service of the Divine King of all mankind. That in fact had been the ruling resolve in his mind, the resolve determining his relations not only with Lady Sunderbund

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but with Lady Ella and his family, his friends, enemies, and associates. He had set out upon this course unchecked by any doubt, and overriding the manifest disapproval of his wife and his younger daughters. Lady Sunderbund's enthusiasm had been enormous and sustaining. . . .

Almost imperceptibly that resolve had weakened. Imperceptibly at first. Then the decline had been perceived as one sometimes perceives a thing in the background out of the corner of one's eye. . . .

In all his early anticipations of the chapel enterprise, he had imagined himself in the likeness of a small but eloquent figure standing in a large exposed place and calling this lost misled world back to God. Lady Sunderbund, he assumed, was to provide the large exposed place (which was dimly paved with pews) and guarantee that little matter which was to relieve him of sordid anxieties for his family, the stipend. He had agreed in an inattentive way that this was to be eight hundred a year, with a certain proportion of the subscriptions. "At fi'st, *I* shall be the chief subsc'iber," she said. "Before the 'ush comes." He had been so content to take all this for granted and think no more about it—more particularly to think no more about it—that for a time he entirely disregarded the intense decorative activities into which Lady Sunderbund incontinently plunged. Had he been inclined to remark them he certainly might have done so, even though a considerable proportion was being thoughtfully veiled for a time from his eyes.

For example there was the young architect with

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the wonderful tie whom he met once or twice at lunch in the Hyde Park flat. This young man had pulled the conversation again and again, Lady Sunderbund aiding and abetting, in the direction of the "ideal church." It was his ambition, he said, some day, to build an ideal church, "divorced from tradition."

Scrope had been drawn at last into a dissertation. He said that hitherto all temples and places of worship had been conditioned by orientation due to the seasonal aspects of religion, they pointed to the east or—as in the case of the Egyptian temples—to some particular star, and by sacramentalism, which centred everything on a highly lit sacrificial altar. It was almost impossible to think of a church built upon other lines than that. The architect would be so free that——

"Absolutely free," interrupted the young architect. "He might for example build a temple like a star."

"Or like some wondrous casket," said Lady Sunderbund. . . .

And also there was a musician with fuzzy hair and an impulsive way of taking the salted almonds, who wanted to know about religious music.

Scrope hazarded the idea that a chanting people was a religious people. He said moreover that there was a fine religiosity about Moussorgski, but that the most beautiful single piece of music in the world was Beethoven's sonata, Opus 111—he was thinking, he said, more particularly of the Adagio at the end, *molto semplice e cantabile*. It had a real quality of divinity.

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The musician betrayed impatience at the name of Beethoven, and thought, with his mouth appreciatively full of salted almonds, that nowadays we had got a little beyond *that* anyhow.

"We shall be superhuman before we get beyond either Purcell or Beethoven," said Scrope. . . .

Nor did he attach sufficient importance to Lady Sunderbund's disposition to invite Positivists, members of the Brotherhood Church, leaders among the Christian Scientists, old followers of the Rev. Charles Voysey, Swedenborgians, Moslem converts, Indian Theosophists, psychic phenomena and so forth, to meet him. Nevertheless it began to drift into his mind that he was by no means so completely in control of the new departure as he had supposed at first. Both he and Lady Sunderbund professed universalism; but while his was the universalism of one who would simplify to the bare fundamentals of a common faith, hers was the universalism of the collector. Religion to him was something that illuminated the soul, to her it was something that illuminated prayer-books. For a considerable time they followed their divergent inclinations without any realisation of their divergence. None the less a vague doubt and dissatisfaction with the prospect before him arose to cloud Scrope's confidence.

At first there was little or no doubt of his own faith. He was still altogether convinced that he had to confess and proclaim God in his life. He was as sure that God was the necessary king and saviour of mankind and of a man's life, as he was of the truth of the Binomial Theorem. But what began first to

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fade was the idea that he had been specially called to proclaim the True God to all the world. He would have the most amiable conference with Lady Sunderbund, and then as he walked back to Notting Hill he would suddenly find stuck into his mind like a challenge, Heaven knows how: "Another prophet?" Even if he succeeded in this mission enterprise, he found himself asking, what would he be but just a little West-end Mohammed? He would have founded another sect, and we have to make an end to all sects. How is there to be an end to sects, if there are still to be chapels—richly decorated chapels—and congregations, and salaried specialists in God?

That was a very disconcerting idea. It was particularly active at night. He did his best to consider it with a cool detachment, regardless of the facts that his private income was just under three hundred pounds a year, and that his experiments in cultured journalism made it extremely improbable that the most sedulous literary work would do more than double this scanty sum. Yet for all that these nasty, ugly, sordid facts were entirely disregarded, they did somehow persist in coming in and squatting down, shapeless in a black corner of his mind—from which their eyes shone out so to speak—whenever his doubt whether he ought to set up as a prophet at all was under consideration.

§ 6

Then very suddenly on this October afternoon the situation had come to a crisis.

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He had gone to Lady Sunderbund's flat to see the plans and drawings for the new church in which he was to give his message to the world. They had brought home to him the complete realisation of Lady Sunderbund's impossibility. He had attempted upon the spur of the moment an explanation of just how much they differed, and he had precipitated a storm of extravagantly perplexing emotions. . . .

She kept him waiting for perhaps ten minutes before she brought the plans to him. He waited in the little room with the Wyndham Lewis picture that opened upon the balcony painted with crazy squares of livid pink. On a golden table by the window a number of recently bought books were lying, and he went and stood over these, taking them up one after another. The first was "The Countess of Huntingdon and Her Circle," that bearder of light-minded archbishops, that formidable harbourer of Wesleyan chaplains. For some minutes he studied the grim portrait of this inspired lady standing with one foot ostentatiously on her coronet, and then turned to the next volume. This was a life of Saint Teresa, that energetic organiser of Spanish nunneries. The third dealt with Madame Guyon. It was difficult not to feel that Lady Sunderbund was reading for a part. . . .

She entered.

She was wearing a long simple dress of spangled white with a very high waist; she had a bracelet of green jade, a waistband of green silk, and her hair was held by a wreath of artificial laurel, very stiff and green. Her arms were full of big rolls of cartridge-paper and tracing-paper. "I'm so pleased," she said. "It's 'eady at last and I can show you."

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She banged the whole armful down upon a vivid little table of inlaid black-and-white wood. He rescued one or two rolls and a sheet of tracing-paper from the floor.

"It's the Temple," she panted in a significant whisper. "It's the Temple of the One T'ue God!"

She scrabbled among the papers, and held up the elevation of a strange square building to his startled eyes. "Isn't it just pe'fect?" she demanded.

He took the drawing from her. It represented a building, manifestly an enormous building, consisting largely of two great, deeply fluted towers flanking a vast archway approached by a long flight of steps. Between the towers appeared a dome. It was as if the Mosque of Saint Sophia had produced this offspring in a *mésalliance* with the cathedral of Wells. Its enormity was made manifest by the minuteness of the large automobiles that were driving away in the foreground after "setting down." "Here is the plan," she said, thrusting another sheet upon him before he could fully take in the quality of the design. "The g'eat Hall is to be pe'fectly 'ound, no aisle, no altar, and in lettas of sapphiah, 'God is ev'ywhe'."

She added with a note of solemnity, "It will hold th'ee thousand people sitting down."

"But—!" said Scrope.

"The'e's a sort of g'andeur," she said. "It's young Venable's wo'k. It's his fi'st g'ate oppo'tunity."

"But—is this to go on that little site in Aldwych?"

"He says the' isn't 'oom the'!" she explained. "He wants to put it out at Golda's G'een."

"But—if it is to be this little simple chapel we proposed, then wasn't our idea to be central?"

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"But if the 'isn't 'oom!" she said—conclusively.

"And isn't this—isn't it rather a costly undertaking, rather *more* costly——"

"That doesn't matta. I'm making heaps and heaps of money. Half my p'ope'ty is in shipping and a lot of the 'est in munitions. I'm 'icher than eva'. Isn't the' a sort of g'andeur?" she pressed.

He put the elevation down. He took the plan from her hands and seemed to study it. But he was really staring blankly at the whole situation.

"Lady Sunderbund," he said at last, with an effort, "I am afraid all this won't do."

"Won't *do*!"

"No. It isn't in the spirit of my intention. It isn't in a great building of this sort—so—so ornate and imposing, that the simple gospel of God's Universal Kingdom can be preached."

"But oughtn't so g'ate a message to have as g'ate a pulpit?"

And then as if she would seize him before he could go on to further repudiations, she sought hastily among the drawings again.

"But look," she said. "It has ev'ything! It's not only a p'eaching place; it's a headquarters for ev'ything."

With the rapid movements of an excited child she began to thrust the remarkable features and merits of the great project upon him. The preaching dome was only the heart of it. There were to be a library, "efecto'ies," consultation rooms, classrooms, a publication department, a big underground printing establishment. "Nowadays," she said, "ev'y g'ate

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movement must p'int." There was to be music, she said, "a g'ate invisible o'gan," hidden amidst the architectural details, and pouring out its sounds into the dome, and then she glanced in passing at possible "p'ocessions" round the preaching dome. This preaching dome was not a mere shut-in drum for spiritual reverberations, around it ran great open corridors, and in these corridors there were to be "chapels."

"But what for?" he asked, stemming the torrent. "What need is there for chapels? There are to be no altars, no masses, no sacraments?"

"No," she said, "but they are to be chapels for special int'ests; a chapel for science, a chapel for healing, a chapel for gov'ment. Places for people to sit and think about those things—with paintings and symbols."

"I see your intention," he admitted. "I see your intention."

"The' is to be a g'ate da'k blue 'ound chapel for sta's and atoms and the myst'ry of matta." Her voice grew solemn. "All still and deep and high. Like a k'ystal in a da'k place. You will go down steps to it. Th'ough a da'k 'ounded a'ch ma'ked with mathematical symbols and balances and scientific app'atus. . . . And the ve'y next to it, the ve'y next, is to be a little b'ight chapel for bi'ds and flowas!"

"Yes," he said, "it is all very fine and expressive. It is, I see, a symbolical building, a great artistic possibility. But is it the place for me? What I have to say is something very simple, that God is the king of the whole world, king of the ha'penny newspaper

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and the omnibus and the vulgar every-day things, and that they have to worship him and serve him as their leader in every moment of their lives. *This* isn't that. *This* is the old religions over again. *This* is taking God apart. This is putting him into a fresh casket instead of the old one. And . . . *I don't like it.*"

"Don't *like* it," she cried, and stood apart from him with her chin in the air, a tall astonishment and dismay.

"I can't do the work I want to do with *this*."

"But— Isn't it *you*' idea?"

"No. It is not in the least my idea. I want to tell the whole world of the one God that can alone unite it and save it—and you make this extravagant toy."

He felt as if he had struck her directly he uttered that last word.

"*Toy!*" she echoed, taking it in, "you call it a *Toy!*"

A note in her voice reminded him that there were two people who might feel strongly in this affair.

"My dear Lady Sunderbund," he said with a sudden change of manner, "I must needs follow the light of my own mind. I have had a vision of God, I have seen him as a great leader towering over the little lives of men, demanding the little lives of men, prepared to take them and guide them to the salvation of mankind and the conquest of pain and death. I have seen him as the God of the human affair, a God of politics, a God of such muddy and bloody wars as this war, a God of economics, a God of railway junctions and clinics and factories and evening schools, a God in fact of men. *This* God—this God here, that

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you want to worship, is a God of artists and poets—of elegant poets, a God of bric-à-brac, a God of choice allusions. Oh, it has its *grandeur*! I don't want you to think that what you are doing may not be altogether fine and right for *you* to do. But it is not what *I* have to do. . . . I cannot—indeed I cannot—go on with this project—upon these lines.”

He paused, flushed and breathless. Lady Sunderbund had heard him to the end. Her bright face was brightly flushed, and there were tears in her eyes. It was like her that they should seem tears of the largest, most expensive sort, tears of the first water.

“But,” she cried, and her red delicate mouth went awry with dismay and disappointment, and her expression was the half-incredulous expression of a child suddenly and cruelly disappointed: “You won't go on with all this?”

“No,” he said. “My dear Lady Sunderbund——”

“Oh! don't Lady Sunderbund *me*!” she cried with a novel rudeness. “Don't you see I've done it all for you?”

He winced and felt boorish. He had never liked and disapproved of Lady Sunderbund so much as he did at that moment. And he had no words for her.

“How can I stop it all at once like this?”

And still he had no answer.

She pursued her advantage. “What am I to *do*?” she cried.

She turned upon him passionately. “Look what you've done!” She marked her points with finger upheld, and gave odd suggestions in her face of an angry coster girl. “Eva' since I met you, I've wo'-

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shipped you. I've been 'eady to follow you anywhe'—to do anything. Eva' since that night when you sat so calm and dignified, and they baited you and wo'id you. When they we' all vain and cleva', and you—you thought only of God and 'iligion and didn't mind fo' you'self. . . . Up to then—I'd been living—oh! the emptiest life. . . .”

The tears ran. “Pe'haps I shall live it again. . . .” She dashed her grief away with a hand beringed with stones as big as beetles.

“I said to myself, this man knows something I *don't* know. He's got the seeds of ete'nal life su'ely. I made up my mind then and the' I'd follow you and back you and do all I could fo' you. I've lived fo' you. Eve' since. Lived fo' you. And now when all my little plans are 'ipe, *you*—! Oh!”

She made a quaint little gesture with pink fists up-raised, and then stood with her hand held up, staring at the plans and drawings that were littered over the inlaid table. “I've planned and planned. I said, I will build him a temple. I will be his temple se'vant. . . . Just a me' se'vant. . . .”

She could not go on.

“But it is just these temples that have confused mankind,” he said.

“Not *my* temple,” she said presently, now openly weeping over the gay rejected drawings. “You could have explained. . . .”

“Oh!” she said petulantly, and thrust them away from her so that they went sliding one after the other on to the floor. For some long-drawn moments there was no sound in the room but the slowly accelerated

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slide and flop of one sheet of cartridge-paper after another. . . .

"We could have been so happy," she wailed, "se'ving oua God."

And then this disconcerting lady did a still more disconcerting thing. She staggered a step towards Scrope, seized the lapels of his coat, bowed her head upon his shoulder, put her black hair against his cheek, and began sobbing and weeping.

"My dear lady!" he expostulated, trying weakly to disengage her.

"Let me k'y," she insisted, gripping more resolutely, and following his backward pace. "You must let me k'y. You *must* let me k'y."

His resistance ceased. One hand supported her, the other patted her shining hair. "My dear *child*!" he said. "My dear *child*! I had no idea. That you would take it like this. . . ."

§ 7

That was but the opening of an enormous interview. Presently he had contrived in a helpful and sympathetic manner to seat the unhappy lady on a sofa, and when after some cramped discourse she stood up before him, wiping her eyes with a wet wonder of lace, to deliver herself the better, a new-born appreciation of the tactics of the situation made him walk to the other side of the table under colour of picking up a drawing. . . .

In the retrospect he tried to disentangle the threads of a discussion that went to and fro and contradicted

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itself and began again far back among things that had seemed forgotten and disposed of. Lady Sunderbund's mind was extravagantly untrained, a wild-grown mental thicket. At times she reproached him as if he were a heartless God; at times she talked as if he were a recalcitrant servant. Her mingling of utter devotion and the completest disregard for his thoughts and wishes dazzled and distressed his mind. It was clear that for half a year her clear, bold, absurd will had been crystallised upon the idea of giving him exactly what she wanted him to want. The crystal sphere of those ambitions lay now shattered between them.

She was trying to reconstruct it before his eyes.

She was, she declared, prepared to alter her plans in any way that would meet his wishes. She had not understood. "If it is a Toy," she cried, "show me how to make it *not* a Toy! Make it 'eal!"

He said it was the bare idea of a temple that made it impossible. And there was this drawing here; what did it mean? He held it out to her. It represented a figure, distressingly like himself, robed as a priest in vestments.

She snatched the offending drawing from him and tore it to shreds.

"If you don't want a Temple, have a meeting-house. You wanted a meeting-house anyhow."

"Just any old meeting-house," he said. "Not that special one. A place without choirs and clergy."

"If you won't have music," she responded, "*don't* have music. If God doesn't want music it can go. I *can't* think God does not app'ove of music, but—that

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is for you to settle. If you don't like the' being o'naments, we'll make it all plain. Some g'ate g'ey Dome—all g'ey and black. If it isn't to be beautiful, it can be ugly. Yes, ugly. It can be as ugly"—she sobbed—"as the City Temple. We will get some otha a'chitect—some *City* a'chitect. Some man who has built B'anch Banks or 'ailway-stations. That's if you think it pleases God. . . . B'eak young Venable's hea't. . . . Only why should you not let *me* make a place fo' you' message? Why shouldn't it be *me*? You must *have* a place. You've got to p'each somewhe'e."

"As a man, not as a priest."

"Then p'each as a man. You must still wea' something."

"Just ordinary clothes."

"O'dina'y clothes a' clothes in the fashion," she said. "You would have to go to you' taila for a new p'eaching coat with b'aid put on dif'ently, or two buttons instead of th'ee. . . ."

"One needn't be fashionable."

"Ev'ybody is fash'nable. How can you *help* it? Some people wea' *old* fashions; that's all. . . . A cassock's an old fashion. There's nothing so plain as a cassock."

"Except that it's a clerical fashion. I want to be just as I am now."

"If you think that—that *owoble* suit is o'dina'y clothes!" she said, and stared at him and gave way to tears of real tenderness.

"A cassock," she cried with passion. "Just a pe'fectly plain cassock. Fo' deecency! . . . Oh, if you won't—not even *that*!"

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§ 8

As he walked now after his unsuccessful quest of Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey towards the Serpentine he acted that stormy interview with Lady Sunderbund over again. At the end, as a condition indeed of his departure, he had left things open. He had assented to certain promises. He was to make her understand better what it was he needed. He was not to let anything that had happened affect their "spi'tual f'en-ship." She was to abandon all her plans, she was to begin again "at the ve'y beginning." But he knew that indeed there should be no more beginning again with her. He knew that quite beyond these questions of the organisation of a purified religion, it was time their association ended. She had wept upon him; she had clasped both his hands at parting and prayed to be forgiven. She was drawing him closer to her by their very dissension. She had infected him with the softness of remorse; from being a bright and spirited person, she had converted herself into a warm and touching person. Her fine, bright black hair against his cheek and the clasp of her hand on his shoulder was now inextricably in the business. The perplexing, the astonishing thing in his situation was that there was still a reluctance to make a conclusive breach.

He was not the first of men who have tried to find in vain how and when a relationship becomes an entanglement. He ought to break off now, and the riddle was just why he should feel this compunction in breaking off now. He had disappointed her, and

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he ought not to have disappointed her; that was the essential feeling. He had never realised before as he realised now this peculiar quality of his own mind and the gulf into which it was leading him. It came as an illuminating discovery.

He was a social animal. He had an instinctive disposition to act according to the expectations of the people about him, whether they were reasonable or congenial expectations or whether they were not. That, he saw for the first time, had been the ruling motive of his life; it was the clew to him. Man is not a reasonable creature; he is a socially responsive creature trying to be reasonable in spite of that fact. From the days in the rectory nursery when Scrope had tried to be a good boy on the whole and just a little naughty sometimes until they stopped smiling, through all his life of school, university, curacy, vicarage, and episcopacy up to this present moment, he perceived now that he had acted upon no authentic and independent impulse. His impulse had always been to fall in with people and satisfy them. And all the painful conflicts of those last few years had been due to a growing realisation of jarring criticisms, of antagonised forces that required from him incompatible things. From which he had now taken refuge—or at any rate sought refuge—in God. It was paradoxical, but manifestly in God he not only sank his individuality but discovered it.

It was wonderful how much he had thought and still thought of the feelings and desires of Lady Sunderbund, and how little he thought of God. Her he had been assiduously propitiating, managing, accept-

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ing, for three months now. Why? Partly because she demanded it, and there was a quality in her demand that had touched some hidden spring—of vanity perhaps it was—in him, that made him respond. But partly also it was because after the evacuation of the palace at Princhester he had felt more and more, felt but never dared to look squarely in the face, the catastrophic change in the worldly circumstances of his family. Only this chapel adventure seemed likely to restore those fallen and bedraggled fortunes. He had not anticipated a tithe of the dire quality of that change. They were not simply uncomfortable in the Notting Hill home. They were miserable. He fancied they looked to him with something between reproach and urgency. Why had he brought them here? What next did he propose to do? He wished at times they would say it out instead of merely looking it. Phoebe's failing appetite chilled his heart.

That concern for his family, he believed, had been his chief motive in clinging to Lady Sunderbund's projects long after he had realised how little they would forward the true service of God. No doubt there had been moments of flattery, moments of something, something rather in the nature of an excited affection; some touch of the magnificent in her, some touch of the infantile—both appealed magnetically to his imagination; but the real effective cause was his habitual solicitude for his wife and children and his consequent desire to prosper materially. As his first dream of being something between Mohammed and Peter the Hermit in a new proclamation of

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God to the world lost colour and life in his mind, he realised more and more clearly that there was no way of living in a state of material prosperity and at the same time in a state of active service to God. The Church of the One True God (by favour of Lady Sunderbund) was a gaily coloured lure. . . .

And yet he wanted to go on with it. All his imagination and intelligence was busy now with the possibility of in some way subjugating Lady Sunderbund, and modifying her and qualifying her to an endurable proposition. Why?

Why?

There could be but one answer, he thought. Brought to the test of action, *he did not really believe in God!* He did not believe in God as he believed in his family. He did not believe in the reality of either his first or his second vision; they had been dreams, autogenous revelations, exaltations of his own imaginations. These beliefs were upon different grades of reality. Put to the test, his faith in God gave way; a sword of plaster against a reality of steel.

And yet he did believe in God. He was as persuaded that there was a God as he was that there was another side to the moon. His intellectual conviction was complete. Only, beside the living, breathing—occasionally coughing—reality of Phoebe, God was something as unsubstantial as the Binomial Theorem. . . .

Very like the Binomial Theorem as one thought over that comparison. . . .

By this time he had reached the banks of the Serpentine and was approaching the grey stone bridge

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that crosses just where Hyde Park ends and Kensington Gardens begins. Following upon his doubts of his religious faith had come another still more extraordinary question: "Although there is a God, does he indeed matter more in our ordinary lives than that same demonstrable Binomial Theorem? Isn't one's duty to Phoebe plain and clear?" Old Like-man's argument came back to him with novel and enhanced powers. Wasn't he after all selfishly putting his own salvation in front of his plain duty to those about him? What did it matter if he told lies, taught a false faith, perjured and damned himself, if after all those others were thereby saved and comforted?

"But that is just where the whole of this state of mind is false and wrong," he told himself. "God is something more than a priggish devotion, an intellectual formula. He has a hold and a claim—he *should* have a hold and a claim—exceeding all the claims of Phoebe, Miriam, Daphne, Clementina—all of them. . . ."

"But he hasn't! . . ."

It was to that he had got after he had left Lady Sunderbund, and to that he now returned. It was the thinness and unreality of his thought of God that had driven him post-haste to Brighton-Pomfrey in search for that drug that had touched his soul to belief.

Was God so insignificant in comparison with his family that after all with a good conscience he might preach him every Sunday in Lady Sunderbund's church, wearing Lady Sunderbund's vestments?

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Before him he saw an empty seat. The question was so immense and conclusive, it was so clearly a choice for all the rest of his life between God and the dear things of this world, that he felt he could not decide it upon his legs. He sat down, threw an arm along the back of the seat and drummed with his fingers. . . .

If the answer was "yes" then it was decidedly a pity that he had not stayed in the church. It was ridiculous to strain at the cathedral gnat and then swallow Lady Sunderbund's decorative Pantechnicon. . . .

For the first time, Scrope definitely regretted his apostasy.

A trivial matter, as it may seem to the reader, intensified that regret. Three weeks ago Borrowdale, the Bishop of Howcaster, had died, and Scrope would have been the next in rotation to succeed him on the bench of bishops. He had always looked forward to the House of Lords, intending to take rather a new line; to speak more, and to speak more plainly and fully upon social questions than had hitherto been the practice of his brethren. Well, that had gone. . . .

§ 9

Regrets were vain now. The question before his mind was growing clear; whether he was to persist in this self-imposed martyrdom of himself and his family or whether he was to go back upon his outbreak of visionary fanaticism and close with this last

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opportunity that Lady Sunderbund offered of saving at least the substance of the comfort and social status of his wife and daughters. In which case it was clear to him he would have to go to great lengths and exercise very considerable subtlety—and magnetism—in the management of Lady Sunderbund. . . .

He found himself composing a peculiar speech to her, very frank and revealing, and one that he felt would dominate her thoughts. . . . She attracted him oddly. At least this afternoon she had attracted him. . . .

And repelled him. . . .

A wholesome gust of moral impatience stirred him. He smacked the back of the seat hard, as though he smacked himself.

No. He did not like it. . . .

A torn sunset of purple and crimson streamed raggedly up above and through the half-stripped trees of Kensington Gardens, and he found himself wishing that Heaven would give us fewer sublimities in sky and mountain and more in our hearts. Against the background of darkling trees and stormily flaming sky a girl was approaching him. There was little to be seen of her but her outline. Something in her movement caught his eye and carried his memory back to a sundown at Hunstanton. Then as she came nearer he saw that it was Eleanor.

It was odd to see her here. He had thought she was at Newnham.

But anyhow it was very pleasant to see her. And there was something in Eleanor that promised an answer to his necessity. The girl had a kind of in-

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stinctive wisdom. She would understand the quality of his situation better perhaps than any one. He would put the essentials of that situation as fully and plainly as he could to her. Perhaps she, with that clear young idealism of hers, would give him just the lift and the light of which he stood in need. She would comprehend both sides of it, the points about Phoebe as well as the points about God.

When first he saw her she seemed to be hurrying, but now she had fallen to a loitering pace. She looked once or twice behind her and then ahead, almost as though she expected some one and was not sure whether this person would approach from east or west. She did not observe her father until she was close upon him.

Then she was so astonished that for a moment she stood motionless, regarding him. She made an odd movement, almost as if she would have walked on, that she checked in its inception. Then she came up to him and stood before him. "It's Dad," she said.

"I didn't know you were in London, Norah," he began.

"I came up suddenly."

"Have you been home?"

"No. I wasn't going home. At least—not until afterwards."

Then she looked away from him, east and then west, and then met his eye again.

"Won't you sit down, Norah?"

"I don't know whether I can."

She consulted the view again and seemed to come to a decision. "At least, I will for a minute."

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She sat down. For a moment neither of them spoke. . . .

"What are you doing here, little Norah?"

She gathered her wits. Then she spoke rather volubly. "I know it looks bad, Daddy. I came up to meet a boy I know, who is going to France to-morrow. I had to make excuses—up there. I hardly remember what excuses I made."

"A boy you know?"

"Yes."

"Do *we* know him?"

"Not yet."

For a time Scrope forgot the Church of the One True God altogether. "Who is this boy?" he asked.

With a perceptible effort Eleanor assumed a tone of common-sense conventionality. "He's a boy I met first when we were skating last year. His sister has the study next to mine."

Father looked at daughter, and she met his eyes. "Well?"

"It's all happened so quickly, Daddy," she said, answering all that was implicit in that "Well?" She went on, "I would have told you about him if he had seemed to matter. But it was just a friendship. It didn't seem to matter in any serious way. Of course we'd been good friends—and talked about all sorts of things. And then suddenly you see,"—her tone was offhand and matter of fact—"he has to go to France."

She stared at her father with the expression of a hostess who talks about the weather. And then the tears gathered and ran down her cheeks.

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She turned her face to the Serpentine and clinched her fist.

But she was now fairly weeping "I didn't know he cared. I didn't know I cared."

His next question took some time in coming.

"And it's love, little Norah?" he asked.

She was comfortably crying now, the defensive altogether abandoned. "It's love, Daddy. . . . Oh! love! . . . He's going to-morrow."

For a minute or so neither spoke. Scrope's mind was entirely made up in the matter. He approved altogether of his daughter. But the traditions of parentage, his habit of restrained decision, made him act a judicial part. "I'd like just to see this boy," he said, and added: "if it isn't rather interfering. . . ."

"Dear Daddy!" she said. "Dear Daddy!" and touched his hand. "He'll be coming here. . . ."

"If you could tell me a few things about him," said Scrope. "Is he an undergraduate?"

"You see," began Eleanor and paused to marshal her facts. "He graduated this year. Then he's been in training at Cambridge. Properly he'd have a fellowship. He took the Natural Science tripos, zoology chiefly. He's good at philosophy, but of course our Cambridge philosophy is so silly—McTaggart blowing bubbles. . . . His father's a doctor, Sir Hedley Riverton."

As she spoke her eyes had been roving up the path and down. "He's coming," she interrupted. She hesitated. "Would you mind if I went and spoke to him first, Daddy?"

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"Of course go to him. Go and warn him I'm here," said Scrope.

Eleanor got up, and was immediately greeted with joyful gestures by an approaching figure in khaki. The two young people quickened their paces as they drew nearer one another. There was a rapid greeting; they stood close together and spoke eagerly. Scrope could tell by their movements when he became the subject of their talk. He saw the young man start and look over Eleanor's shoulder, and he assumed an attitude of philosophical contemplation of the water, so as to give the young man the liberty of his profile. . . .

He did not look up until they were quite close to him, and when he did he saw a pleasant, slightly freckled fair face obviously agitated, and very honest blue eyes. "I hope you don't think, sir, that it's bad form of me to ask Eleanor to come up and see me as I've done. I telegraphed to her on an impulse, and it's been very kind of her to come up to me."

"Sit down," said Scrope, "sit down. You're Mr. Riverton?"

"Yes, sir," said the young man. He had the frequent "sir" of the subaltern. Scrope was in the centre of the seat, and the young officer sat down on one side of him while Eleanor took up a watching position on her father's other hand. "You see, sir, we've hardly known each other—I mean we've been associated over a philosophical society and all that sort of thing, but in a more familiar way, I mean. . . ."

He hung for a moment, slightly short of breath. Scrope helped him with a grave but sympathetic

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movement of the head. "It's a little difficult to explain," the young man apologised.

"We hadn't understood, I think, either of us very much. . . . We'd just been friendly—and liked each other. And so it went on even when I was training. And then when I found I had to go out—I'm going out rather earlier than I expected—I thought suddenly I wouldn't ever go to Cambridge again at all perhaps—and there was something in one of her letters. . . . I thought of it a lot, sir, I thought it all over, and I thought it wasn't right for me to do anything and I didn't do anything until this morning. And then I sort of *had* to telegraph. I know it was frightful cheek and bad form and all that, sir. It is. It would be worse if she wasn't different—I mean, sir, if she was just an ordinary girl. . . . But I had a sort of feeling—just wanting to see her. I don't suppose you've ever felt anything, sir, as I felt I wanted to see her—and just hear her speak to me. . . ."

He glanced across Scrope at Eleanor. It was as if he justified himself to them both.

Scrope glanced furtively at his daughter who was leaning forward with tender eyes on her lover, and his heart went out to her. But his manner remained judicial.

"All this is very sudden," he said.

"Or you would have heard all about it, sir," said young Riverton. "It's just the hurry that has made this seem furtive. All that there is between us, sir, is just the two telegrams we've sent, hers and mine. I hope you won't mind our having a little time to-

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gether. We won't do anything very committal. It's as much friendship as anything. I go by the evening train to-morrow."

"Mm," said Scrope with his eye on Eleanor.

"In these uncertain times," he began.

"Why shouldn't I take a risk too, Daddy?" said Eleanor sharply.

"I know there's that side of it," said the young man. "I oughtn't to have telegraphed," he said.

"Can't I take a risk?" exclaimed Eleanor. "I'm not a doll. I don't want to live in wadding until all the world is safe for me."

Scrope looked at the glowing face of the young man.

"Is this taking care of her?" he asked.

"If you hadn't telegraphed—!" she cried with a threat in her voice, and left it at that.

"Perhaps I feel about her—rather as if she was as strong as I am—in those ways. Perhaps I shouldn't. I could hardly endure myself, sir—cut off from her. And a sort of blank. Nothing said."

"You want to work out your own salvation," said Scrope to his daughter.

"No one else can," she answered. "I'm—I'm grown up."

"Even if it hurts?"

"To live is to be hurt somehow," she said. "This — This—" She flashed her love. She intimated by a gesture that it is better to be stabbed with a clean knife than to be suffocated or poisoned or to decay. . . .

Scrope turned his eyes to the young man again.

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He liked him. He liked the modelling of his mouth and chin and the line of his brows. He liked him altogether. He pronounced his verdict slowly. "I suppose, after all," he said, "that this is better than the tender solicitude of a safe and prosperous middle-aged man. Eleanor, my dear, I've been thinking to-day that a father who stands between his children and hardship, by doing wrong, may really be doing them a wrong. You are a dear girl to me. . . . I won't stand between you two. Find your own salvation." He stood up. "I go west," he said, "presently. You I think go east."

"I can assure you, sir," the young man began.

Scrope held his hand out. "Take your life in your own way," he said.

He turned to Eleanor. "Talk as you will," he said.

She clasped his hand with emotion. Then she turned to the waiting young man, who saluted.

"You'll come back to supper?" Scrope said, without thinking out the implications of that invitation.

She assented as carelessly. The fact that she and her lover were to go, with their meeting legalised and blessed, excluded all other considerations. The two young people turned to each other.

Scrope stood for a moment or so and then sat down again.

For a time he could think only of Eleanor. . . . He watched the two young people as they went eastward. As they walked their shoulders and elbows bumped amicably together. . . .

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§ 10

Presently he sought to resume the interrupted thread of his thoughts. He knew that he had been dealing with some very tremendous and urgent problem when Eleanor had appeared. Then he remembered that Eleanor at the time of her approach had seemed to be a solution rather than an interruption. Well, she had her own life. She was making her own life. Instead of solving his problems she was solving her own. God bless those dear grave children! They were nearer the elemental things than he was. That eastward path led to Victoria—and thence to a very probable death. The lad was in the infantry and going straight into the trenches.

Love, death, God; this war was bringing the whole world back to elemental things, to heroic things. The years of comedy and comfort were at an end in Europe; the age of steel and want was here. And he had been thinking— What had he been thinking?

He mused, and the scheme of his perplexities reshaped itself in his mind. But at that time he did not realise that a powerful new light was falling upon it now, cast by the tragic illumination of these young lovers whose love began with a parting. He did not see how reality had come to all things through that one intense reality. He reverted to the question as he had put it to himself before first he recognised Eleanor. Did he believe in God? Should he go on with this Sunderbund adventure in which he no longer believed? Should he play for safety and comfort, trusting to God's toleration? Or go back to his

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family and warn them of the years of struggle and poverty his renunciation cast upon them?

Somehow Lady Sunderbund's chapel was very remote and flimsy now, and the hardships of poverty seemed less black than the hardship of a youthful death.

Did he believe in God? Again he put that fundamental question to himself.

He sat very still in the sunset peace, with his eyes upon the steel mirror of the waters. The question seemed to fill the whole scene, to wait, even as the water and sky and the windless trees were waiting. . . .

And then by imperceptible degrees there grew in Scrope's mind the persuasion that he was in the presence of the living God. This time there was no vision of angels nor stars, no snapping of bowstrings, no throbbing of the heart nor change of scene, no magic and melodramatic drawing back of the curtain from the mysteries; the water and the bridge, the ragged black trees, and a distant boat that broke the silvery calm with an arrow of black ripples, all these things were still before him. But God was there too. God was everywhere about him. This persuasion was over him and about him; a dome of protection, a power in his nerves, a peace in his heart. It was an exalting beauty; it was a perfected conviction. . . . This indeed was the coming of God, the real coming of God. For the first time Scrope was absolutely sure that for the rest of his life he would possess God. Everything that had so perplexed him seemed to be clear now, and his troubles lay at the foot of this last complete

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realisation like a litter of dust and leaves in the foreground of a sunlit, snowy mountain range.

It was incredible that he could ever have doubted.

§ 11

It was a phase of extreme intellectual clairvoyance. A multitude of things that hitherto had been higgledy-piggledy, contradictory, and incongruous in his mind became lucid, serene, full, and assured. He seemed to see all things plainly as one sees things plainly through perfectly clear still water in the shadows of a summer noon. His doubts about God, his periods of complete forgetfulness and disregard of God, this conflict of his instincts and the habits and affections of his daily life with the service of God, ceased to be perplexing incompatibilities and were manifest as necessary, understandable aspects of the business of living.

It was no longer a riddle that little immediate things should seem of more importance than great and final things. For man is a creature thrusting his way up from the beast to divinity, from the blindness of individuality to the knowledge of a common end. We stand deep in the engagements of our individual lives looking up to God, and only realising in our moments of exaltation that through God we can escape from and rule and alter the whole world-wide scheme of individual lives. Only in phases of illumination do we realise the creative powers that lie ready to man's hand. Personal affections, immediate obligations, ambitions, self-seeking, these are among the

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natural and essential things of our individual lives, as intimate almost as our primordial lusts and needs; God, the true God, is a later revelation, a newer, less natural thing in us; a knowledge still remote, uncertain and confused with superstition; an apprehension as yet entangled with barbaric traditions of fear and with ceremonial surgeries, blood-sacrifices, and the maddest barbarities of thought. We are only beginning to realise that *God is here*; so far as our minds go he is still not here continually; we perceive him and then again we are blind to him. God is the last thing added to the completeness of human life. To most his presence is imperceptible throughout their lives; they know as little of him as a savage knows of the electric waves that beat through us for ever from the sun. All this appeared now so clear and necessary to Scrope that he was astonished he had ever found the quality of contradiction in these manifest facts.

In this unprecedented lucidity that had now come to him, Scrope saw as a clear and simple necessity that there can be no such thing as a continuous living presence of God in our lives. That is an unreasonable desire. There is no permanent exaltation of belief. It is contrary to the nature of life. One cannot keep actively believing in and realising God round all the twenty-four hours any more than one can keep awake through the whole cycle of night and day, day after day. If it were possible so to apprehend God without cessation, life would dissolve in religious ecstasy. But nothing human has ever had the power to hold the curtain of sense continually

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aside and retain the light of God always. We must get along by remembering our moments of assurance. Even Jesus himself, leader of all those who have hailed the coming kingdom of God, had cried upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The business of life on earth, life itself, is a thing curtained off, as it were, from such immediate convictions. That is in the constitution of life. Our ordinary state of belief, even when we are free from doubt, is necessarily far removed from the intuitive certainty of sight and hearing. It is a persuasion, it falls far short of perception. . . .

"We don't know directly," Scrope said to himself with a checking gesture of the hand, "we don't *see*. We can't. We hold on to the remembered glimpse, we go over our reasons. . . ."

And it was clear too just because God is thus manifest like the momentary drawing of a curtain, sometimes to this man for a time and sometimes to that, but never continuously to any, and because the perception of him depends upon the ability and quality of the perceiver, because to the intellectual man God is necessarily a formula, to the active man a will and a commandment, and to the emotional man love, there can be no creed defining him for all men, and no ritual and special forms of service to justify a priesthood. "God is God," he whispered to himself, and the phrase seemed to him the discovery of a sufficient creed. God is his own definition; there is no other definition of God. Scrope had troubled himself with endless arguments whether God was a person, whether he was concerned with personal troubles,

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whether he loved, whether he was finite. It were as reasonable to argue whether God was a frog or a rock or a tree. He had imagined God as a figure of youth and courage, had perceived him as an effulgence of leadership, a captain like the sun. The vision of his drug-quickenened mind had but symbolised what was otherwise inexpressible. Of that he was now sure. He had not seen the Invisible but only its sign and visible likeness. He knew now that all such presentations were true and that all such presentations were false. Just as much and just as little was God the darkness and the brightness of the ripples under the bows of the distant boat, the black beauty of the leaves and twigs of those trees now acid-clear against the flushed and deepening sky. These riddles of the profundities were beyond the compass of common living. They were beyond the needs of common living. He was but a little earth parasite, sitting idle in the darkling day, trying to understand his infinitesimal functions on a minor planet. Within the compass of terrestrial living God showed himself in its own terms. The life of man on earth was a struggle for unity of spirit and for unity with his kind, and the aspect of God that alone mattered to man was a unifying kingship without and within. So long as men were men, so would they see God. Only when they reached the crest could they begin to look beyond. So we knew God, so God was to us; since we struggled, he led our struggle, since we were finite and mortal he defined an aim, his personality was the answer to our personality; but God, *except in so far as he was to us*, remained inaccessible, inexplicable, wonderful, shin-

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ing through beauty, shining beyond research, greater than time or space, above good and evil and pain and pleasure.

§ 12

Scrope's mind was saturated as it had never been before by his sense of the immediate presence of God. He floated in that realisation. He was not so much thinking now as conversing starkly with the divine interlocutor, who penetrated all things and saw into and illuminated every recess of his mind. He spread out his ideas to the test of this presence; he brought out his hazards and interpretations that this light might judge them.

There came back to his mind the substance of his two former visions; they assumed now a reciprocal quality, they explained one another and the riddle before him. The first had shown him the personal human aspect of God, he had seen God as the unifying captain calling for his personal service, the second had set the stage for that service in the spectacle of mankind's adventure. He had been shown a great multitude of human spirits reaching up at countless points towards the conception of the racial unity under a divine leadership, he had seen mankind on the verge of awakening to the kingdom of God. "That solves no mystery," he whispered, gripping the seat and frowning at the water; "mysteries remain mysteries; but that is the reality of religion. And now, now, what is my place? What have I to do? That is the question I have been asking always; the ques-

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tion that this moment now will answer; what have *I* to do? . . .”

God was coming into the life of all mankind in the likeness of a captain and a king; all the governments of men, all the leagues of men, their debts and claims and possessions, must give way to the world republic under God the king. For five troubled years he had been staring religion in the face, and now he saw that it must mean this—or be no more than fetichism, Obi, Orphic mysteries or ceremonies of Demeter, a legacy of mental dirtiness, a residue of self-mutilation and superstitious sacrifices from the cunning, fear-haunted, ape-dog phase of human development. But it did mean this. And every one who apprehended as much was called by that very apprehension to the service of God’s kingdom. To live and serve God’s kingdom on earth, to help to bring it about, to propagate the idea of it, to establish the method of it, to incorporate all that one made and all that one did into its growing reality, was the only possible life that could be lived, once that God was known.

He sat with his hands gripping his knees, as if he were holding on to his idea. “And now for my part,” he whispered, brows knit, “now for my part.”

Ever since he had given his confirmation addresses he had been clear that his task, or at least a considerable portion of his task, was to tell of this faith in God and of this conception of service in his kingdom as the form and rule of human life and human society. But up to now he had been floundering hopelessly in his search for a method and means of telling. That, he saw, still needed to be thought out. For

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example one cannot run through the world crying, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." Men's minds were still so filled with old theological ideas that for the most part they would understand by that only a fantasy of some great coming of angels and fiery chariots and judgments, and hardly a soul but would doubt one's sanity and turn scornfully away. But one must proclaim God not to confuse but to convince men's minds. It was that and the habit of his priestly calling that had disposed him towards a pulpit. There he could reason and explain. The decorative genius of Lady Sunderbund had turned that intention into a vast iridescent absurdity.

This sense he had of thinking openly in the sight of God, enabled him to see the adventure of Lady Sunderbund without illusion and without shame. He saw himself at once honest and disingenuous, divided between two aims. He had no doubt now of the path he had to pursue. A stronger man of permanently clear aims might possibly turn Lady Sunderbund into a useful opportunity, oblige her to provide the rostrum he needed; but for himself, he knew he had neither the needed strength nor clearness; she would smother him in decoration, overcome him by her picturesque persistence. It might be ridiculous to run away from her, but it was necessary. And he was equally clear now that for him there must be no idea of any pulpit, of any sustained mission. He was a man of intellectual moods; only at times, he realised, had he the inspiration of truth; upon such uncertain snatches and glimpses he must live; to make his life a ministry would be to face phases when he would

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simply be "carrying on," with his mind blank and his faith asleep. . . .

His thought spread out from this perennial decision to more general things again. *Had God any need of organised priesthoods at all?* Wasn't that just what had been the matter with religion for the last three thousand years?

His visions and his sense of access to God had given a new courage to his mind; in these moods of enlightenment he could see the world as a comprehensible ball, he could see history as an understandable drama. He had always been on the verge of realising before, he realised now, the two entirely different and antagonistic strands that interweave in the twisted rope of contemporary religion; the old strand of the priest, the fetichistic element of the blood-sacrifice and the obscene rite, the element of ritual and tradition, of the cult, the caste, the consecrated tribe; and interwoven with this so closely as to be scarcely separable in any existing religion was the new strand, the religion of the prophets, the unidolatrous universal worship of the one true God. Priest religion is the antithesis to prophet religion. He saw that the founders of all the great existing religions of the world had been like himself—only that he was a weak and commonplace man with no creative force, and they had been great men of enormous initiative—men reaching out, and never with a complete definition, from the old kind of religion to the new. The Hebrew prophets, Jesus, whom the priests killed when Pilate would have spared him, Mohammed, Buddha, had this much in common, that they

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had sought to lead men from temple-worship, idol-worship, from rites and ceremonies and the rule of priests, from anniversaryism and sacramentalism, into a direct and simple relation to the simplicity of God. Religious progress had always been liberation and simplification. But none of these efforts had got altogether clear. The organising temper in men, the disposition to dogmatic theorising, the distrust of the discretion of the young by the wisdom of age, the fear of indiscipline which is so just in warfare and so foolish in education, the tremendous power of the propitiatory tradition, had always caught and crippled every new gospel before it had run a score of years. Jesus for example gave man neither a theology nor a church organisation; his sacrament was an innocent feast of memorial; but the fearful, limited, imitative men he left to carry on his work speedily restored all these three abominations of the antiquated religion, theology, priest, and sacrifice. Jesus indeed, caught into identification with the ancient victim of the harvest sacrifice and turned from a plain teacher into a horrible blood bath and a mock cannibal meal, was surely the supreme feat of the ironies of chance. . . .

"It is curious how I drift back to Jesus," said Scrope. "I have never seen how much truth and good there was in his teaching until I broke away from Christianity and began to see him plain. If I go on as I am going, I shall end a Nazarene. . . ."

He thought on. He had a feeling of temerity, but then it seemed as if God within him bade him be of good courage.

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Already in a glow of inspiration he had said practically as much as he was now thinking in his confirmation address, but now he realised completely what it was he had then said. There could be no priests, no specialised ministers of the one true God, because every man to the utmost measure of his capacity was bound to be God's priest and minister. Many things one may leave to specialists; surgery, detailed administration, chemistry, for example; but it is for every man to think his own philosophy and think out his own religion. One man may tell another, but no man may take charge of another. A man may avail himself of electrician or gardener or what not, but he must stand directly before God; he may suffer neither priest nor king. These other things are incidental, but God, the kingdom of God, is what he is for.

"Good," he said, checking his reasoning. "So I must bear witness to God—but neither as priest nor pastor. I must write and talk about him as I can. No reason why I should not live by such writing and talking if it does not hamper my message to do so. But there must be no high place, no ordered congregation. I begin to see my way. . . ."

The evening was growing dark and chill about him now, the sky was barred with deep bluish purple bands drawn across a chilly brightness that had already forgotten the sun, the trees were black and dim, but his understanding of his place and duty was growing very definite.

"And this duty to bear witness to God's kingdom and serve it is so plain that I must not deflect my witness even by a little, though to do so means

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comfort and security for my wife and children. *God comes first.* . . .

"They must not come between God and me. . . .

"But there is more in it than that."

He had come round at last through the long clearing-up of his mind, to his fundamental problem again. He sat darkly reluctant.

"I must not play priest or providence to them," he admitted at last. "I must not even stand between God and them."

He saw now what he had been doing; it had been the flaw in his faith that he would not trust his family to God. And he saw too that this distrust has been the flaw in the faith of all religious systems hitherto. . . .

§ 13

In this strange voyage of the spirit which was now drawing to its end, in which Scrope had travelled from the confused, unanalysed formulas and assumptions and implications of his rectory upbringing to his present stark and simple realisation of God, he had at times made some remarkable self-identifications. He was naturally much given to analogy; every train of thought in his mind set up induced parallel currents. He had likened himself to the Anglican church, to the whole Christian body, as, for example, in his imagined second conversation with the angel of God. But now he found himself associating himself with a still more far-reaching section of mankind. This excess of solicitude was traceable perhaps in nearly every one in all the past

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of mankind who had ever had the vision of God. An excessive solicitude to shield those others from one's own trials and hardships, to preserve the exact quality of the revelation for example, had been the fruitful cause of crippling errors, spiritual tyrannies, dogmatisms, dissensions, and futilities. "Suffer little children to come unto me"; the text came into his head with an effect of contribution. The parent in us all flares out at the thought of the younger and weaker minds; we hide difficulties, seek to spare them from the fires that temper the spirit, the sharp edge of the truth that shapes the soul. Christian is always trying to have a carriage sent back from the Celestial City for his family. Why, we ask, should they flounder dangerously in the morasses that we escaped, or wander in the forests in which we lost ourselves? Catch these souls young, therefore, save them before they know they exist, kidnap them to heaven; vaccinate them with a catechism they may never understand, lull them into comfort and routine. Instinct plays us false here as it plays the savage mother false when she snatches her fevered child from the doctor's hands. The last act of faith is to trust those we love to God. . . .

Hitherto he had seen the great nets of theological overstatement and dogma that kept mankind from God as if they were the work of purely evil things in man, of pride, of self-assertion, of a desire to possess and dominate the minds and souls of others. It was only now that he saw how large a share in the obstruction of God's Kingdom had been played by the love of the elder and the parent, by the carefulness,

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the fussy care, of good men and women. He had wandered in wildernesses of unbelief, in dangerous places of doubt and questioning, but he had left his wife and children safe and secure in the self-satisfaction of orthodoxy. To none of them except to Eleanor had he ever talked with any freedom of his new apprehensions of religious reality. And that had been at Eleanor's initiative. There was, he saw now, something of insolence and something of treachery in this concealment. His ruling disposition throughout the crisis had been to force comfort and worldly well-being upon all those dependents even at the price of his own spiritual integrity. In no way had he consulted them upon the bargain. . . . While we have pottered, each for the little good of his own family, each for the lessons and clothes and leisure of his own children, assenting to this injustice, conforming to that dishonest custom, being myopically benevolent and fundamentally treacherous, our accumulated folly has achieved this catastrophe. It is not so much human wickedness as human weakness that has permitted the youth of the world to go through this hell of blood and mud and fire. The way to the kingdom of God is the only way to the true safety, the true well-being of the children of men. . . .

It wasn't fair to them. But now he saw how unfair it was to them in a light that has only shone plainly upon European life since the great interlude of the armed peace came to an end in August, 1914. Until that time it had been the fashion to ignore death and evade poverty and necessity for the young. We can shield our young no longer, death has broken

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through our precautions and tender evasions—and his eyes went eastward into the twilight that had swallowed up his daughter and her lover.

The tumbled darkling sky, monstrous masses of frowning blue with icy gaps of cold light, was like the great confusions of the war. All our youth has had to go into that terrible and destructive chaos—because of the kings and churches and nationalities sturdier-souled men would have set aside.

Everything was sharp and clear in his mind now. Eleanor after all had brought him his solution.

He sat quite still for a little while, and then stood up and turned northward towards Notting Hill.

The keepers were closing Kensington Gardens, and he would have to skirt the Park to Victoria Gate and go home by the Bayswater Road. . . .

§ 14

As he walked he rearranged in his mind this long-overdue apology for his faith that he was presently to make to his family. There was no one to interrupt him and nothing to embarrass him, and so he was able to set out everything very clearly and convincingly. There was perhaps a disposition to digress into rather voluminous subordinate explanations, on such themes for instance as sacramentalism, whereon he found himself summarising Frazer's "Golden Bough," which the Chasters' controversy had first obliged him to read, and upon the irrelevance of the question of immortality to the process of salvation.

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But the reality of his *éclaircissement* was very different from anything he prepared in these anticipations.

Tea had been finished and put away, and the family was disposed about the dining-room engaged in various evening occupations; Phoebe sat at the table working at some mathematical problem, Clementina was reading with her chin on her fist and a frown on her brow; Lady Ella, Miriam, and Daphne were busy making soft washing-cloths for the wounded; Lady Ella had brought home the demand for them from the Red Cross centre in Burlington House. The family was all down-stairs in the dining-room because the evening was chilly, and there was yet no fire up-stairs in the drawing-room. He came into the room and exchanged greetings with Lady Ella. Then he stood for a time surveying his children. Phoebe, he noted, was a little flushed; she put passion into her work; on the whole she was more like Eleanor than any other of them. Miriam knitted with a steady skill. Clementina's face too expressed a tussle. He took up one of the rough-knit washing-cloths upon the side-table, and asked how many could be made in an hour. Then he asked some idle obvious question about the fire up-stairs. Clementina made an involuntary movement; he was disturbing her. He hovered for a moment longer. He wanted to catch his wife's eye and speak to her first. She looked up, but before he could convey his wish for a private conference with her, she smiled at him and then bent over her work again.

He went into the back study and lit his gas fire. Hitherto he had always made a considerable explosion

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when he did so, but this time by taking thought and lighting his match before he turned on the gas he did it with only a gentle thud. Then he lit his reading-lamp and pulled down the blind—pausing for a time to look at the lit dressmaker's opposite. Then he sat down thoughtfully before the fire. Presently Ella would come in and he would talk to her. He waited a long time, thinking only weakly and inconsecutively, and then he became restless. Should he call her?

But he wanted their talk to begin in a natural-seeming way. He did not want the portentousness of "wanting to speak" to her and calling her out to him. He got up at last and went back into the other room. Clementina had gone up-stairs, and the book she had been reading was lying closed on the side-board. He saw it was one of Chasters' books; he took it up, it was "The Core of Truth in Christianity," and he felt an irrational shock at the idea of Clementina reading it. In spite of his own immense changes of opinion he had still to revise his conception of the polemical Chasters as an evil influence in religion. He fidgeted past his wife to the mantel in search of an imaginary mislaid pencil. Clementina came down with some bandage linen she was cutting out. He hung over his wife in a way that he felt *must* convey his desire for a conversation. Then he picked up Chasters' book again. "Does any one want this?" he asked.

"Not if I may have it again," consented Clementina.

He took it back with him and began to read again

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those familiar controversial pages. He read for the best part of an hour with his knees drying until they smoked over the gas. What curious stuff it was! How it wrangled! Was Chasters a religious man? Why did he write these books? Had he really a passion for truth or only a Swift-like hatred of weakly thinking people? None of this stuff in his books was really wrong, provided it was religious-spirited. Much of it had been indeed destructively illuminating to its reader. It let daylight through all sorts of walls. Indeed, the more one read the more vividly true its acid-bit lines became. . . . And yet, and yet, there was something hateful in the man's tone. Scrope held the book and thought. He had seen Chasters once or twice. Chasters had the sort of face, the sort of voice, the sort of bearing that made one think of his possibly saying upon occasion, rudely and rejoicingly, "*More fool you!*" Nevertheless Scrope perceived now with an effect of discovery that it was from Chasters that he had taken all the leading ideas of the new faith that was in him. Here was the stuff of it. He had forgotten how much of it was here. During those months of worried study while the threat of a Chasters prosecution hung over him his mind had assimilated almost unknowingly every assimilable element of the Chasters doctrine; he had either assimilated and transmuted it by the alchemy of his own temperament, or he had reacted obviously and filled in Chasters' gaps and pauses. Chasters could beat a road to the Holy of Holies, and shy at entering it. But in spite of all the man's roughness, in spite of a curious flavour of baseness and malice

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about him, the spirit of truth had spoken through him. God has a use for harsh ministers. In one man God lights the heart, in another the reason becomes a consuming fire. God takes his own where he finds it. He does not limit himself to nice people. In these matters of evidence and argument, in his contempt for amiable, demoralising compromise, Chasters served God as Scrope could never hope to serve him. Scrope's new faith had perhaps been altogether impossible if the Chasters controversy had not ploughed his mind.

For a time Scrope dwelt upon this remarkable realisation. Then as he turned over the pages his eyes rested on a passage of uncivil and ungenerous sarcasm. Against old Likeman of all people! . . .

What did a girl like Clementina make of all this? How had she got the book? From Eleanor? The stuff had not hurt Eleanor. Eleanor had been able to take the good that Chasters taught, and reject the evil of his spirit. . . .

He thought of Eleanor, gallantly working out her own salvation. The world was moving fast to a phase of great freedom—for the young and the bold. . . . He liked that boy. . . .

His thoughts came back with a start to his wife. The evening was slipping by and he had momentous things to say to her. He went and just opened the door.

"*Ella!*" he said.

"Did you want me?"

"Presently."

She put a liberal interpretation upon that "pres-

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ently," so that after what seemed to him a long interval he had to call again, "*Ella!*"

"Just a minute," she answered.

§ 15

Lady Ella was still, so to speak, a little in the other room when she came to him.

"Shut the door, please," he said, and felt the request had just that flavour of portentousness he wished to avoid.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I wanted to talk to you—about some things. I've done something rather serious to-day. I've made an important decision."

Her face became anxious. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"You see," he said, leaning upon the mantel-shelf and looking down at the gas flames, "I've never thought that we should all have to live in this crowded house for long."

"*All!*" she interrupted in a voice that made him look up sharply. "You're not going away, Ted?"

"Oh no. But I hoped we should all be going away in a little time. It isn't so."

"I never quite understood why you hoped that."

"It was plain enough."

"How?"

"I thought I should have found something to do that would have enabled us to live in better style. I'd had a plan."

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"What plan?"

"It's fallen through."

"But what plan was it?"

"I thought I should be able to set up a sort of broad church chapel. I had a promise."

Her voice was rich with indignation. "And she has betrayed you?"

"No," he said, "I have betrayed her."

Lady Ella's face showed them still at cross purposes. He looked down again and frowned. "I can't do that chapel business," he said. "I've had to let her down. I've got to let you all down. There's no help for it. It isn't the way. I can't have anything to do with Lady Sunderbund and her chapel."

"But," Lady Ella was still perplexed.

"It's too great a sacrifice."

"Of us?"

"No, of myself. I can't get into her pulpit and do as she wants and keep my conscience. It's been a horrible riddle for me. It means plunging into all this poverty for good. But I can't work with her, Ella. She's impossible."

"You mean—you're going to break with Lady Sunderbund?"

"I must."

"Then Teddy!"—she was a woman groping for light amidst intolerable perplexities—"why did you ever leave the church?"

"Because I have ceased to believe——"

"But had it nothing to do with Lady Sunderbund?"

He stared at her in astonishment.

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"If it means breaking with that woman," she said.

"You mean," he said, beginning for the first time to comprehend her, "that you don't mind the poverty?"

"Poverty!" she cried. "I cared for nothing but the disgrace."

"Disgrace?"

"Oh never mind, Ted! If it isn't true, if I've been dreaming. . . ."

Instead of a woman stunned by a life sentence of poverty, he saw his wife rejoicing as if she had heard good news.

Their minds were held for a minute by the sound of some one knocking at the house door; one of the girls opened the door, there was a brief hubbub in the passage and then they heard a cry of "Eleanor!" through the folding doors.

"There's Eleanor," he said, realising he had told his wife nothing of the encounter in Hyde Park.

They heard Eleanor's clear voice: "Where's Mummy? Or Daddy?" and then: "Can't stay now, dears. Where's Mummy or Daddy?"

"I ought to have told you," said Scrope quickly. "I met Eleanor in the Park. By accident. She's come up unexpectedly. To meet a boy going to the front. Quite a nice boy. Son of Riverton the doctor. The parting had made them understand one another. It's all right, Ella. It's a little irregular, but I'd stake my life on the boy. She's very lucky."

Eleanor appeared through the folding doors. She came to business at once.

"I promised you I'd come back to supper here,

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Daddy," she said. "But I don't want to have supper here. I want to stay out late."

She saw her mother look perplexed. "Hasn't Daddy told you?"

"But where is young Riverton?"

"He's outside."

Eleanor became aware of a broad chink in the folding doors that was making the dining-room an auditorium for their dialogue. She shut them deftly.

"I have told Mummy," Scrope explained. "Bring him in to supper. We ought to see him."

Eleanor hesitated. She indicated her sisters beyond the folding doors. "They'll all be watching us, Mummy," she said. "We'd be uncomfortable. And besides——"

"But you can't go out and dine with him alone!"

"Oh, Mummy! It's our only chance."

"Customs are changing," said Scrope.

"But *can* they?" asked Lady Ella.

"I don't see why not."

The mother was still doubtful, but she was in no mood to cross her husband that night. "It's an exceptional occasion," said Scrope, and Eleanor knew her point was won. She became radiant. "I can be late?"

Scrope handed her his latch-key without a word.

"You dear kind things," she said, and went to the door. Then turned and came back and kissed her father. Then she kissed her mother. "It is so kind of you," she said, and was gone. They listened to her passage through a storm of questions in the dining-room. . . .

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"Three months ago that would have shocked me," said Lady Ella.

"You haven't seen the boy," said Scrope.

"But the appearances!"

"Aren't we rather breaking with appearances?" he said.

"And he goes to-morrow—perhaps to get killed," he added. "A lad like a schoolboy. A *young* thing. Because of the political foolery that we priests and teachers have suffered in the place of the Kingdom of God, because we have allowed the religion of Europe to become a lie; because no man spoke the word of God. You see—when I see that—see those two, those children of one-and-twenty, wrenched by tragedy, beginning with a parting. . . . It's like a knife slashing at all our appearances and discretions. . . . Think of *our* love-making. . . ."

The front door banged.

He had some idea of resuming their talk. But his was a scattered mind now.

"It's a quarter to eight," he said as if in explanation.

"I must see to the supper," said Lady Ella.

§ 16

There was an air of tension at supper as though the whole family felt that momentous words impended. But Phœbe had emerged victorious from her mathematical struggle, and she seemed to eat with better appetite than she had shown for some time. It was a cold-meat supper; Lady Ella had found it impos-

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sible to keep up the regular practice of a cooked dinner in the evening, and now it was only on Thursdays that the Scropes, to preserve their social tradition, dressed and dined; the rest of the week they supped. Lady Ella never talked very much at supper; this evening was no exception. Clementina talked of London University and Bedford College; she had been making inquiries; Daphne described some of the mistresses at her new school. The feeling that something was expected had got upon Scrope's nerves. He talked a little in a flat and obvious way, and lapsed into thoughtful silences. While supper was being cleared away he went back into his study.

Thence he returned to the dining-room hearth-rug as his family resumed their various occupations.

He tried to speak in a casual conversational tone.

"I want to tell you all," he said, "of something that has happened to-day."

He waited. Phoebe had begun to figure at a fresh sheet of computations. Miriam bent her head closer over her work, as though she winced at what was coming. Daphne and Clementina looked at one another. Their eyes said "Eleanor!" But he was too full of his own intention to read that glance. Only his wife regarded him attentively.

"It concerns you all," he said.

He looked at Phoebe. He saw Lady Ella's hand go out and touch the girl's hand gently to make her desist. Phoebe obeyed, with a little sigh.

"I want to tell you that to-day I refused an income that would certainly have exceeded fifteen hundred pounds a year."

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Clementina looked up now. This was not what she expected. Her expression conveyed protesting inquiry.

"I want you all to understand why I did that and why we are in the position we are in, and what lies before us. I want you to know what has been going on in my mind."

He looked down at the hearth-rug, and tried to throw off a memory of his Princhester classes for young women, that oppressed him. His manner he forced to a more familiar note. He stuck his hands into his trousers pockets.

"You know, my dears, I *had* to give up the church. I just simply didn't believe any more in orthodox Church teaching. And I feel I've never explained that properly to you. Not at all clearly. I want to explain that now. It's a queer thing, I know, for me to say to you, but I want you to understand that I am a religious man. I believe that God matters more than wealth or comfort or position or the respect of men, that he also matters more than *your* comfort and prosperity. God knows I have cared for your comfort and prosperity. I don't want you to think that in all these changes we have been through lately, I haven't been aware of all the discomfort into which you have come—the relative discomfort. Compared with Princhester this is dark and crowded and poverty-stricken. I have never felt *crowded* before, but in this house I know you are all horribly crowded. It is a house that seems almost contrived for small discomforts. This narrow passage outside; the incessant going up and down stairs. And there are

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other things. There is the blankness of our London Sundays. What is the good of pretending? They are desolating. There's the impossibility too of getting good servants to come into our dug-out kitchen. I'm not blind to all these sordid consequences. But all the same, God has to be served first. I had to come to this. I felt I could not serve God any longer as a bishop in the established church, because I did not believe that the established church was serving God. I struggled against that conviction—and I struggled against it largely for your sakes. But I had to obey my conviction. . . . I haven't talked to you about these things as much as I should have done, but partly at least that is due to the fact that my own mind has been changing and reconsidering, going forward and going back, and in that fluid state it didn't seem fair to tell you things that I might presently find mistaken. But now I begin to feel that I have really thought out things, and that they are definite enough to tell you. . . .”

He paused and resumed. “A number of things have helped to change the opinions in which I grew up and in which you have grown up. There were worries at Princhester; I didn't let you know much about them, but there were. There was something harsh and cruel in that atmosphere. I saw for the first time—it's a lesson I'm still only learning—how harsh and greedy rich people and employing people are to poor people and working people, and how ineffective our church was to make things better. That struck me. There were religious disputes in the diocese too, and they shook me. I thought my faith was built on a rock,

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and I found it was built on sand. It was slipping and sliding long before the war. But the war brought it down. Before the war such a lot of things in England and Europe seemed like a comedy or a farce, a bad joke that one tolerated. One tried half consciously, half avoiding the knowledge of what one was doing, to keep one's own little circle and life civilised. The war shook all those ideas of isolation, all that sort of evasion, down. The world is the rightful kingdom of God; we had left its affairs to kings and emperors and suchlike impostors, to priests and profit-seekers and greedy men. We were genteel condoners. The war has ended that. It thrusts into all our lives. It brings death so close— A fortnight ago twenty-seven people were killed and injured within a mile of this by Zeppelin bombs. . . . Every one loses some one. . . . Because through all that time men like myself were going through our priestly mummeries, abasing ourselves to kings and politicians, when we ought to have been crying out: 'No! No! There is no righteousness in the world, there is no right government, except it be the kingdom of God.'"

He paused and looked at them. They were all listening to him now. But he was still haunted by a dread of preaching in his own family. He dropped to the conversational note again.

"You see what I had in mind. I saw I must come out of this, and preach the kingdom of God. That was my idea. I don't want to force it upon you, but I want you to understand why I acted as I did. But let me come to the particular thing that has happened to-day. I did not think when I made my final de-

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cision to leave the church that it meant such poverty as this we are living in—permanently. That is what I want to make clear to you. I thought there would be a temporary dip into dinginess, but that was all. There was a plan—at the time it seemed a right and reasonable plan—for setting up a chapel in London, a very plain and simple undenominational chapel, for the simple preaching of the world kingdom of God. There was some one who seemed prepared to meet all the immediate demands for such a chapel.”

“Was it Lady Sunderbund?” asked Clementina.

Scrope was pulled up abruptly. “Yes,” he said. “It seemed at first a quite hopeful project.”

“We’d have hated that,” said Clementina, with a glance as if for assent, at her mother. “We should all have hated that.”

“Anyhow it has fallen through.”

“We don’t mind that,” said Clementina, and Daphne echoed her words.

“I don’t see that there is any necessity to import this note of—hostility to Lady Sunderbund into this matter.” He addressed himself rather more definitely to Lady Ella. “She’s a woman of a very extraordinary character, highly emotional, energetic, generous to an extraordinary extent. . . .”

Daphne made a little noise like a comment.

A faint acerbity in her father’s voice responded.

“Anyhow you make a mistake if you think that the personality of Lady Sunderbund has very much to do with this thing now. Her quality may have brought out certain aspects of the situation rather more sharply than they might have been brought out

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under other circumstances, but if this chapel enterprise had been suggested by quite a different sort of person, by a man, or by a committee, in the end I think I should have come to the same conclusion. Leave Lady Sunderbund out. Any chapel was impossible. It is just this specialisation that has been the trouble with religion. It is just this tendency to make it the business of a special sort of man, in a special sort of building, on a special day— Every man, every building, every day belongs equally to God. That is my conviction. I think that the only possible existing sort of religious meeting is something after the fashion of the Quaker meeting. In that there is no professional religious man at all; not a trace of the sacrifices to the ancient gods. . . . And no room for a professional religious man. . . .” He felt his argument did a little escape him. He snatched, “That is what I want to make clear to you. God is not a specialty, he is a universal interest.”

He stopped. Both Daphne and Clementina seemed disposed to say something and did not say anything.

Miriam was the first to speak. “Daddy,” she said, “I know I’m stupid. But are we still Christians?”

“I want you to think for yourselves.”

“But I mean,” said Miriam, “are we—something like Quakers—a sort of very broad Christians?”

“You are what you choose to be. If you want to keep in the church, then you must keep in the church. If you feel that the Christian doctrine is alive, then it is alive so far as you are concerned.”

“But the creeds?” asked Clementina.

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He shook his head. "So far as Christianity is defined by its creeds, I am not a Christian. If we are going to call any sort of religious feeling that has a respect for Jesus, Christianity, then no doubt I am a Christian. But so was Mohammed at that rate. Let me tell you what I believe. I believe in God, I believe in the immediate presence of God in every human life, I believe that our lives have to serve the Kingdom of God. . . ."

"That practically is what Mr. Chasters calls 'The Core of Truth in Christianity.'"

"You have been reading him?"

"Eleanor lent me the book. But Mr. Chasters keeps his living."

"I am not Chasters," said Scrope stiffly, and then relenting: "What he does may be right for him. But I could not do as he does."

Lady Ella had said no word for some time.

"I would be ashamed," she said quietly, "if you had not done as you have done. I don't mind—The girls don't mind—all this. . . . Not when we understand—as we do now. . . ."

That was the limit of her eloquence.

"Not now that we understand, Daddy," said Clementina, and a faint flavour of Lady Sunderbund seemed to pass and vanish.

There was a queer little pause. He stood rather distressed and perplexed, because the talk had not gone quite as he had intended it to go. It had deteriorated towards personal issues. Phoebe broke the awkwardness by jumping up and coming to her father. "Dear Daddy," she said, and kissed him.

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"We didn't understand properly," said Clementina, in the tone of one who explains away much—that had never been spoken. . . .

"Daddy," said Miriam with an inspiration, "may I play something to you presently?"

"But the fire!" interjected Lady Ella, disposing of that idea.

"I want you to know, all of you, the faith I have," he said.

Daphne had remained seated at the table.

"Are we never to go to church again?" she asked, as if at a loss.

§ 17

Scrope went back into his little study. He felt shy and awkward with his daughters now. He felt it would be difficult to get back to usualness with them. To-night it would be impossible. To-morrow he must come down to breakfast as though their talk had never occurred. . . . In his rehearsal of this deliverance during his walk home he had spoken much more plainly of his sense of the coming of God to rule the world and end the long age of the warring nations and competing traders, and he had intended to speak with equal plainness of the passionate subordination of the individual life to this great common purpose of God and man, an aspect he had scarcely mentioned at all. But in that small room, in the presence of those dear familiar people, those great horizons of life had vanished. The room with its folding doors had fixed the scale. The wall-paper had smothered the Kingdom of

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God; he had been, he felt, domestic; it had been an after-supper talk. He had been put out too by the mention of Lady Sunderbund and the case of Chasters. . . .

In his study he consoled himself for this diminution of his intention. It had taken him five years, he reflected, to get to his present real sense of God's presence and to his personal subordination to God's purpose. It had been a little absurd, he perceived, to expect these girls to leap at once to a complete understanding of the halting hints, the allusive indications of the thoughts that now possessed his soul. He tried like some maiden speaker to recall exactly what it was he had said and what it was he had forgotten to say. . . . This was merely a beginning, merely a beginning. . . .

After the girls had gone to bed, Lady Ella came to him and she was glowing and tender; she was in love again as she had not been since the shadow had first fallen between them. "I was so glad you spoke to them," she said. "They had been puzzled. But they are dear loyal girls."

He tried to tell her rather more plainly what he felt about the whole question of religion in their lives, but eloquence had departed from him.

"You see, Ella, life cannot get out of tragedy—and sordid tragedy—until we bring about the kingdom of God. It's no unreality that has made me come out of the church."

"No, dear. No," she said soothingly and reassuringly.

"With all these mere boys going to the most dread-

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ful deaths in the trenches, with death, hardship, and separation running amuck in the world——”

“One has to do something,” she agreed.

“I know, dear,” he said, “that all this year of doubt and change has been a dreadful year for you.”

“It was stupid of me,” she said, “but I have been so unhappy. It’s over now—but I was wretched. And there was nothing I could say. . . . I prayed. . . . It isn’t the poverty I feared ever, but the disgrace. Now—I’m happy. I’m happy again.”

“But how far do you come with me?”

“I’m with you.”

“But,” he said, “you are still a churchwoman?”

“I don’t know,” she said. “I don’t mind.”

He stared at her.

“But I thought always that was what hurt you most, my breach with the church.”

“Things are so different now,” she said.

Her heart dissolved within her into tender possessiveness. There came flooding into her mind the old phrases of an ancient story: “Whither thou goest I will go . . . thy people shall be my people and thy God my God. . . . The Lord do so to me and more also if aught but death part thee and me.”

Just those words would Lady Ella have said to her husband now, but she was capable of no such rhetoric.

“Whither thou goest,” she whispered almost inaudibly, and she could get no further. “My dear,” she said. . . .

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§ 18

At two o'clock the next morning Scrope was still up. He was sitting over the snoring gas fire in his study. He did not want to go to bed. His mind was too excited, he knew, for any hope of sleep. In the last twelve hours, since he had gone out across the park to his momentous talk with Lady Sunderbund, it seemed to him that his life had passed through its cardinal crisis and come to its crown and decision. The spiritual voyage that had begun five years ago amidst a stormy succession of theological nightmares had reached harbour at last. He was established now in the sure conviction of God's reality, and of his advent to unify the lives of men and to save mankind. Some unobserved process in his mind had perfected that conviction, behind the cloudy veil of his vacillations and moods. That work was finished now, and the day's experience had drawn the veil and discovered God established.

He contrasted this simple and overruling knowledge of God as the supreme fact in a practical world with that vague and ineffective subject for sentiment who had been the "God" of his Anglican days. Some theologian once spoke of God as "the friend behind phenomena"; that Anglican deity had been rather a vague flummery behind court and society, wealth, "respectability," and the comfortable life. And even while he had lived in lip-service to that complaisant compromise, the true God had been here, waiting for his allegiance, waiting to take up the kingship of this distraught and bloodstained earth. The finding of

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God is but the stripping of bandages from the eyes. Seek and ye shall find. . . .

He whispered four words very softly: "The Kingdom of God!"

That now was the form into which all his life must fall. He recalled his vision of the silver sphere and of ten thousand diverse minds about the world all making their ways to the same one conclusion. Here at last was a king and emperor for mankind for whom one need have neither contempt nor resentment; here was an aim for which man might forge the steel and wield the scalpel, write and paint and till and teach. Upon this conception he must model all his life. Upon this basis he must found friendships and co-operations. All the great religions, Christianity, Islam, in the days of their power and honesty, had proclaimed the advent of this kingdom of God. It had been their common inspiration. The expedition of a religion surrenders when it abandons the promise of its Millennium. But he had recovered that ancient and immortal hope. All men must achieve it, and with their achievement the rule of God begins. He muttered his faith. "It comes. It surely comes. To-morrow I begin. I will do no work that goes not Godward. Always now it shall be the truth as near as I can put it. Always now it shall be the service of the commonweal as well as I can do it. I will live for the republic, for the ending of all false kingship and priestcraft, for the eternal growth of the spirit of man. . . ."

He was, he knew clearly, only one common soldier in a great army that was finding its way to enlistment round and about the earth. He was not alone. While

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the kings of this world fought for dominion these others gathered and found themselves and one another, these others of the faith that grows plain, these men who have resolved to end the bloodstained chronicles of the Dynasts and the miseries of a world that trades in life, for ever. They were many men, speaking divers tongues. He was but one who obeyed the world-wide impulse. He could smile at the artless vanity that had blinded him to the import of his earlier visions, that had made him imagine himself a sole discoverer, a new Prophet, that had brought him so near to founding a new sect. Every soldier in the new host was a recruiting sergeant according to his opportunity. . . . And none was leader. Only God was leader. . . .

“The achievement of the Kingdom of God”; this was his calling. Henceforth this was his business in life. . . .

For a time he indulged in vague dreams of that kingdom of God on earth of which he would be one of the makers; it was a dream of a shadowy splendour of cities, of great scientific achievements, of a universal beauty, of beautiful people living in the light of God, of a splendid adventure, thrusting out at last among the stars. But neither his natural bent nor his mental training inclined him to mechanical or administrative explicitness. Much more was his dream a vision of men inwardly ennobled and united in spirit. He saw history growing reasonable and life visibly noble as mankind realised the divine aim. All the outward peace and order, the joy of physical existence finely conceived, the mounting power and widen-

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ing aim were but the expression and verification of the growth of God within. Then we would bear children for finer ends than the blood and mud of battle-fields. Life would tower up like a great flame. By faith we reached forward to that. And the price one paid for that; one gave sham dignities, false honour, a Levitical righteousness, immediate peace, one bartered kings for God. . . . He looked at the mean, poverty-struck room, he marked the dinginess and tawdriness of its detail and all the sordid evidences of ungracious bargaining and grudging service in its appointments. For all his life now he would have to live in such rooms. He who had been one of the lucky ones. . . . Well, men were living in dug-outs and dying gaily in muddy trenches, they had given limbs and lives, eyes and the joy of movement, prosperity and pride, for a smaller cause and a feebler assurance than this that he had found. . . .

§ 19

Presently his thoughts were brought back to his family by the sounds of Eleanor's return. He heard her key in the outer door; he heard her move about in the hall and then slip lightly up to bed. He did not go out to speak to her, and she did not note the light under his door.

He would talk to her later when this discovery of her own emotions no longer dominated her mind. He recalled her departing figure and how she had walked, touching and looking up to her young mate, and he a little leaning to her. . . .

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“God bless them and save them,” he said. . . .

He thought of her sisters. They had said but little to his clumsy explanations. He thought of the years and experience that they must needs pass through before they could think the fulness of his present thoughts, and so he tempered his disappointment. They were a gallant group, he felt. He had to thank Ella and good fortune that so they were. There was Clementina with her odd quick combatant sharpness, a harder being than Eleanor, but nevertheless as fine-spirited and even more independent. There was Miriam, indefatigably kind. Phœbe too had a real passion of the intellect and Daphne an innate disposition to service. But it was strange how they had taken his proclamation of a conclusive breach with the church as though it was a command they must, at least outwardly, obey. He had expected them to be more deeply shocked; he had thought he would have to argue against objections and convert them to his views. Their acquiescence was strange. They were content he should think all this great issue out and give his results to them. And his wife, well as he knew her, had surprised him. He thought of her words: “Whither thou goest——”

He was dissatisfied with this unconditional agreement. Why could not his wife meet God as he had met God? Why must Miriam put the fantastic question—as though it was not for her to decide: “Are we still Christians?” And pursuing this thought, why couldn’t Lady Sunderbund set up in religion for herself without going about the world seeking for a priest and prophet? Were women Undines who must get

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their souls from mortal men? And who was it tempted men to set themselves up as priests? It was the wife, the disciple, the lover, who was the last, the most fatal pitfall on the way to God.

He began to pray, still sitting as he prayed.

"Oh God!" he prayed. "Thou who hast shown thyself to me, let me never forget thee again. Save me from forgetfulness. And show thyself to those I love; show thyself to all mankind. Use me, O God, use me; but keep my soul alive. Save me from the presumption of the trusted servant; save me from the vanity of authority. . . .

"And let thy light shine upon all those who are so dear to me. . . . Save them from me. Take their dear loyalty. . . ."

He paused. A flushed, childishly miserable face that stared indignantly through glittering tears, rose before his eyes. He forgot that he had been addressing God.

"How can I help you, you *silly* thing?" he said. "I would give my own soul to know that God had given his peace to you. I could not do as you wished. And I have hurt you! . . . You hurt yourself. . . . But all the time you would have hampered me and tempted me—and wasted yourself. It was impossible. . . . And yet you are so fine!"

He was struck by another aspect.

"Ella was happy—partly because Lady Sunderbund was hurt and left desolated. . . .

"Both of them are still living upon nothings. Living for nothings. A phantom way of living. . . ."

For a space he stared blankly at the humming blue gas-jets amidst the incandescent asbestos.

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"Make them understand," he pleaded, as though he spoke confidentially of some desirable and reasonable thing to a friend who sat beside him. "You see it is so hard for them until they understand. It is easy enough when one understands. Easy." He reflected for some moments. "It is as if they could not exist—except in relationship to other definite people. I want them to exist—as now I exist—in relationship to God. Knowing God. . . ."

But now he was talking to himself again.

"So far as one can know God," he said presently.

For a while he remained frowning at the fire. Then he bent forward, turned out the gas, and rose with the air of a man who relinquishes a difficult task. "One is limited," he said. "All one's ideas must fall within one's limitations. Faith is a sort of *tour de force*. A feat of the imagination. For such things as we are. Naturally—naturally. . . . That alters nothing. . . ."

**THE SECRET PLACES
OF THE HEART**

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**THE SECRET PLACES
OF THE HEART**

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE CONSULTATION

§ 1

THE maid was a young woman of great natural calmness; she was accustomed to let in visitors who had this air of being annoyed and finding one umbrella too numerous for them. It mattered nothing to her that the gentleman was asking for Dr. Martineau as if he was asking for something with an unpleasant taste. Almost imperceptibly she relieved him of his umbrella and juggled his hat and coat on to a massive mahogany stand. "What name, sir?" she asked, holding open the door of the consulting room.

"Hardy," said the gentleman, and then yielding it reluctantly with its distasteful three-year-old honour, "Sir Richmond Hardy."

The door closed softly behind him and he found himself in undivided possession of the large indifferent apartment in which the nervous and mental troubles of the outer world eddied for a time on their way to the distinguished specialist. A bowl of daffodils, a handsome bookcase containing bound Victorian magazines and antiquated medical works, some paintings of Scotch scenery, three big armchairs, a buhl clock, and a bronze Dancing Faun, by their want of any collective idea enhanced rather than mitigated the promiscuous disregard of the room. He drifted to the

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midmost of the three windows and stared out despondently at Harley Street.

For a minute or so he remained as still and limp as an empty jacket on its peg, and then a gust of irritation stirred him.

"Damned fool I was to come here," he said. . . .
"*Damned* fool!

"Rush out of the place? . . .

"I've given my name. . . ."

He heard the door behind him open and for a moment pretended not to hear. Then he turned round and followed the girl to the adjacent consulting room. "I don't see what you can do for me," he said as he entered.

"I'm sure *I* don't," said the doctor. "People come here and talk."

There was something reassuringly inaggressive about the figure that confronted Sir Richmond. Dr. Martineau's height wanted at least three inches of Sir Richmond's five feet eleven; he was humanly plump, his face was round and pink and cheerfully wistful, a little suggestive of the full moon, of what the full moon might be if it could get fresh air and exercise. Either his tailor had made his trousers too short or he had braced them too high so that he seemed to have grown out of them quite recently. Sir Richmond had been dreading an encounter with some dominating and mesmeric personality; this amiable presence dispelled his preconceived resistances.

Dr. Martineau, a little out of breath as though he had been running up-stairs, with his hands in his trouser pockets, seemed intent only on disavowals.

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"People come here and talk. It does them good, and sometimes I am able to offer a suggestion.

"Talking to some one who understands a little," he expanded the idea.

"I'm jangling damnably . . . overwork. . . ."

"Not overwork," Dr. Martineau corrected. "Not overwork. Overwork never hurt any one. Fatigue stops that. A man can work—good straightforward work, without internal resistance, until he drops,—and never hurt himself. You must be working against friction."

"Friction! I'm like a machine without oil. I'm grinding to death. . . . And it's so *damned* important I *shouldn't* break down. It's *vital* important."

He stressed his words and reinforced them with a quivering gesture of his upraised clinched hand. "My temper's in rags. I explode at any little thing. I'm *raw*. I can't work steadily for ten minutes and I can't leave off working."

"Your name," said the doctor, "is familiar. Sir Richmond Hardy? In the papers. What is it?"

"Fuel."

"Of course! The Fuel Commission. Stupid of me! We certainly can't afford to have you ill."

"I *am* ill. But you can't afford to have me absent from that Commission."

"Your technical knowledge——"

"Technical knowledge be damned! Those men mean to corner the national fuel supply. And waste it! For their profits. That's what I'm up against. You don't know the job I have to do. You don't know what a Commission of that sort is. The moral

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tangle of it. You don't know how its possibilities and limitations are canvassed and schemed about, long before a single member is appointed. Old Cassidy worked the whole thing with the prime minister. I can see that now as plain as daylight. I might have seen it at first. . . . Three experts who'd been got at; they thought *I'd* been got at; two Labour men who'd do anything you wanted them to do provided you called them 'level-headed.' Wagstaffe the socialist art critic who could be trusted to play the fool and make nationalisation look silly, and the rest mine-owners, railway managers, oil profiteers, financial adventurers . . ."

He was fairly launched. "It's the blind folly of it! In the days before the war it was different. Then there was abundance. A little grabbing or cornering was all to the good. All to the good. It prevented things being used up too fast. And the world was running by habit; the inertia was tremendous. You could take all sorts of liberties. But all this is altered. We're living in a different world. The public won't stand things it used to stand. It's a new public. It's—wild. It'll smash up the show if they go too far. Everything short and running shorter—food, fuel, material. But these people go on. They go on as though nothing had changed. . . . Strikes, Russia, nothing will warn them. There are men on that Commission who would steal the brakes off a mountain railway just before they went down in it. . . . It's a struggle with suicidal imbeciles. It's——! But I'm talking! I didn't come here to talk Fuel."

"You think there may be a smash-up?"

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"I lie awake at night, thinking of it."

"A social smash-up."

"Economic. Social. Yes. Don't you?"

"A social smash-up seems to me altogether a possibility. All sorts of people I find think that," said the doctor. "All sorts of people lie awake thinking of it."

"I wish some of my damned Committee would!"

The doctor turned his eyes to the window. "I lie awake too," he said and seemed to reflect. But he was observing his patient acutely—with his ears.

"But you see how important it is," said Sir Richmond, and left his sentence unfinished.

"I'll do what I can for you," said the doctor, and considered swiftly what line of talk he had best follow.

§ 2

"This sense of a coming smash is epidemic," said the doctor. "It's at the back of all sorts of mental trouble. It is a new state of mind. Before the war it was abnormal—a phase of neurasthenia. Now it is almost the normal state with whole classes of intelligent people. Intelligent, I say. The others always have been casual and adventurous and always will be. A loss of confidence in the general background of life. So that we seem to float over abysses."

"We do," said Sir Richmond.

"And we have nothing but the old habits and ideas acquired in the days of our assurance. There is a discord, a jarring."

The doctor pursued his train of thought. "A new, raw, and dreadful sense of responsibility for the uni-

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verse. Accompanied by a realisation that the job is overwhelmingly too big for us."

"We've got to stand up to the job," said Sir Richmond. "Anyhow, what else is there to do? We *may* keep things together. . . . I've got to do my bit. And if only I could hold myself at it, I could beat those fellows. But that's where the devil of it comes in. Never have I been so desirous to work well in my life. And never have I been so slack and weak-willed and inaccurate. . . . Sloppy. . . . Indolent. . . . *Vicious!* . . ."

The doctor was about to speak, but Sir Richmond interrupted him. "What's got hold of me? What's got hold of me? I used to work well enough. It's as if my will had come untwisted and was ravelling out into separate strands. I've lost my unity. I'm not a man but a mob. I've got to recover my vigour. At any cost."

Again as the doctor was about to speak the word was taken out of his mouth. "And what I think of it, Dr. Martineau, is this: it's fatigue. It's mental and moral fatigue. Too much effort. On too high a level. And too—austere. One strains and fags. *Flags!* 'Flags' I meant to say. One strains and flags and then the lower stuff in one, the subconscious stuff, takes control."

There was a flavour of popularised psychoanalysis about this, and the doctor drew in the corners of his mouth and gave his head a critical slant. "M'm." But this only made Sir Richmond raise his voice and quicken his speech. "I want," he said, "a good tonic. A pick-me-up, a stimulating harmless drug of some

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sort. That's indicated anyhow. To begin with. Something to pull me together, as people say. Bring me up to the scratch again."

"I don't like the use of drugs," said the doctor.

The expectation of Sir Richmond's expression changed to disappointment. "But that's not reasonable," he cried. "That's not reasonable. That's superstition. Call a thing a drug and condemn it! Everything is a drug. Everything that affects you. Food stimulates or tranquillises. Drink. Noise is a stimulant and quiet an opiate. What is life but response to stimulants? Or reaction after them? When I'm exhausted I want food. When I'm overactive and sleepless I want tranquillising. When I'm dispersed I want pulling together."

"But we don't know how to use drugs," the doctor objected.

"But you ought to know."

Dr. Martineau fixed his eye on a first-floor window-sill on the opposite side of Harley Street. His manner suggested a lecturer holding on to his theme.

"A day will come when we shall be able to manipulate drugs—all sorts of drugs—and work them in to our general way of living. I have no prejudice against them at all. A time will come when we shall correct our moods, get down to our reserves of energy by their help, suspend fatigue, put off sleep during long spells of exertion. At some sudden crisis, for example. When we shall know enough to know just how far to go with this, that, or the other stuff. And how to wash out its after-effects. . . . I quite agree with you,—in principle. . . . But that time hasn't come yet. . . .

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Decades of research yet. . . . If we tried that sort of thing now, we should be like children playing with poisons and explosives. . . . It's out of the question."

"I've been taking a few little things already. Easton Syrup, for example."

"Strychnine. It carries you for a time and drops you by the way. Has it done you any good—any *net* good? It has—I can see—broken your sleep."

The doctor turned round again to his patient and looked up into his troubled face.

"Given physiological trouble I don't mind resorting to a drug. Given structural injury I don't mind surgery. But except for any slight mischief your amateur drugging may have done you do not seem to me to be either sick or injured. You've no trouble either of structure or material. You're—worried—ill in your mind, and otherwise perfectly sound. It's the current of your thoughts, fermenting. If the trouble is in the mental sphere, why go out of the mental sphere for a treatment? Talk and thought; these are your remedies. Cool deliberate thought. You're unravelled. You say it yourself. Drugs will only make this or that unravelled strand behave disproportionately. You don't want that. You want to take stock of yourself as a whole—find out where you stand."

"But the Fuel Commission?"

"Is it sitting now?"

"Adjourned till after Whitsuntide. But there's heaps of work to be done.

"Still," he added, "this is my one chance of any treatment."

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The doctor made a calculation. "Three weeks. . . . It's scarcely time enough to begin."

"You're certain that no regimen of carefully planned and chosen tonics——"

"Dismiss the idea. Dismiss it." He decided to take a plunge. "I've just been thinking of a little holiday for myself. But I'd like to see you through this. And if I am to see you through, there ought to be some sort of beginning now. In this three weeks. Suppose. . . ."

Sir Richmond leaped to his thought. "I'm free to go anywhere."

"Golf would drive a man of your composition mad?"

"It would."

"That's that. Still— . . . The country must be getting beautiful again now,—after all the rain we have had. I have a two-seater. I don't know. . . . The repair people promise to release it before Friday."

"But *I* have a choice of two very comfortable little cars. Why not be my guest?"

"That might be more convenient."

"I'd prefer my own car."

"Then what do you say?"

"I agree. Peripatetic treatment."

"South and west. We could talk on the road. In the evenings. By the wayside. We might make the beginnings of a treatment. . . . A simple tour. Nothing elaborate. You wouldn't bring a man?"

"I always drive myself."

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§ 3

"There's something very pleasant," said the doctor, envisaging his own rash proposal, "in travelling along roads you don't know and seeing houses and parks and villages and towns for which you do not feel in the slightest degree responsible. They hide all their troubles from the road. Their back yards are tucked away out of sight, they show a brave face; there's none of the nasty self-betrays of the railway approach. And everything will be fresh still. There will still be a lot of apple-blossom—and bluebells. . . . And all the while we can be getting on with your affair."

He was back at the window now. "I want the holiday myself," he said.

He addressed Sir Richmond over his shoulder. "Have you noted how fagged and unstable *everybody* is getting? Everybody intelligent, I mean."

"It's an infernally worrying time."

"Exactly. Everybody suffers."

"It's no *good* going on in the old ways——"

"It isn't. And it's a frightful strain to get into any new ways. So here we are.

"A man," the doctor expanded, "isn't a creature in vacuo. He's himself and his world. He's a surface of contact, a system of adaptations, between his essential self and his surroundings. Well, our surroundings have become—how shall I put it?—a landslide. The war which seemed such a definable catastrophe in 1914 was, after all, only the first loud crack and smash of the collapse. The war is over and—nothing is over.

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This peace is a farce, reconstruction an exploded phrase. The slide goes on,—it goes, if anything, faster, without a sign of stopping. And all our poor little adaptations! Which we have been elaborating and trusting all our lives! . . . One after another they fail us. We are stripped. . . . We have to begin all over again. . . . I'm fifty-seven and I feel at times nowadays like a chicken new hatched in a thunder-storm."

The doctor walked towards the bookcase and turned.

"Everybody is like that. . . . It isn't—what are you going to do? It isn't—what am I going to do? It's—what are we all going to do? . . . Lord! How safe and established everything was in 1910, say. We talked of this great war that was coming, but nobody thought it would come. We had been born in peace, comparatively speaking; we had been brought up in peace. There was talk of wars. There were wars—little wars—that altered nothing material. . . . Consols used to be at 112 and you fed your household on ten shillings a head a week. You could run over all Europe, barring Turkey and Russia, without even a passport. You could get to Italy in a day. Never were life and comfort so safe—for respectable people. And we *were* respectable people. . . . That was the world that made us what we are. That was the sheltering and friendly greenhouse in which we grew. We fitted our minds to that. . . . And here we are with the greenhouse falling in upon us lump by lump, smash and clatter, the wild winds of heaven tearing in through the gaps."

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Up-stairs on Dr. Martineau's desk lay the typescript of the opening chapters of a book that was intended to make a great splash in the world, his "Psychology of a New Age." He had his metaphors ready.

"We said: 'This system will always go on. We needn't bother about it.' We just planned our lives accordingly. It was like a bird building its nest of frozen snakes. My father left me a decent independence. I developed my position; I have lived between here and the hospital, doing good work, enormously interested, prosperous, mildly distinguished. I had been born and brought up on the good ship Civilisation. I assumed that some one else was steering the ship all right. I never knew; I never inquired."

"Nor did I," said Sir Richmond, "but——"

"And nobody was steering the ship," the doctor went on. "Nobody had ever steered the ship. It was adrift."

"I realised that. I——"

"It is a new realisation. Always hitherto men have lived by faith—as children do, as the animals do. At the back of the healthy mind, human or animal, has been this persuasion: 'This is all right. This will go on. If I keep the rules, if I do so and so, all will be well. I need not trouble further; things are cared for.'"

"If we could go on like that!" said Sir Richmond.

"We can't. That faith is dead. The war—and the peace—have killed it."

The doctor's round face became speculative. His resemblance to the full moon increased. He seemed

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to gaze at remote things. "It may very well be that man is no more capable of living out of that atmosphere of assurance than a tadpole is of living out of water. His mental existence may be conditional on that. Deprived of it he may become incapable of sustained social life. He may become frantically self-seeking—incoherent . . . a stampede. . . . Human sanity may—*disperse*."

"That's our trouble," the doctor completed. "Our fundamental trouble. All our confidences and our accustomed adaptations are destroyed. We fit together no longer. We are—loose. We don't know where we are nor what to do. The psychology of the former time fails to give safe responses, and the psychology of the New Age has still to develop."

§ 4

"That is all very well," said Sir Richmond in the resolute voice of one who will be pent no longer. "That is all very well as far as it goes. But it does not cover my case. I am not suffering from inadaptation. I *have* adapted. I have thought things out. I think—much as you do. Much as you do. So it's not that. But— . . . Mind you, I am perfectly clear where I am. Where we are. What is happening to us all is the break-up of the entire system. Agreed! We have to make another system or perish amidst the wreckage. I see that clearly. Science and plan have to replace custom and tradition in human affairs. Soon. Very soon. Granted. Granted. We used to

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say all that. Even before the war. Now we mean it. We've muddled about in the old ways overlong. Some new sort of world, planned and scientific, has to be got going. Civilisation renewed. Rebuilding civilisation—while the premises are still occupied and busy. It's an immense enterprise, but it is the only thing to be done. In some ways it's an enormously attractive enterprise. Inspiring. It grips my imagination. I think of the other men who must be at work. Working as I do rather in the dark as yet. With whom I shall presently join up. . . . The attempt may fail; all things human may fail; but on the other hand it may succeed. I never had such faith in anything as I have in the rightness of the work I am doing now. I begin at that. But here is where my difficulty comes in. The top of my brain, my innermost self says all that I have been saying, but— The rest of me won't follow. The rest of me refuses to attend, forgets, straggles, misbehaves."

"Exactly."

The word irritated Sir Richmond. "Not 'exactly' at all. 'Amazingly,' if you like. . . . I have this unlimited faith in our present tremendous necessity—for work—for devotion; I believe my share, the work I am doing, is essential to the whole thing—and I work sluggishly. I work reluctantly. I work damnably."

"Exact—" The doctor checked himself. "All that is explicable. Indeed it is. Listen for a moment to me! Consider what you are. Consider what we are. Consider what a man is before you marvel at his ineptitudes of will. Face the accepted facts. Here is a creature not ten thousand generations from the ape,

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his ancestor. Not ten thousand. And that ape again, not a score of thousands from the monkey, his forebear. A man's body, his bodily powers, are just the body and powers of an ape, a little improved, a little adapted to novel needs. That brings me to my point. *Can his mind and will be anything better?* For a few generations, a few hundreds at most, knowledge and wide thought have flared out on the darkneses of life. . . . But the substance of man is ape still. He may carry a light in his brain, but his instincts move in the darkness. Out of that darkness he draws his motives."

"Or fails to draw them," said Sir Richmond.

"Or fails. . . . And that is where these new methods of treatment come in. We explore that failure. Together. What the psychoanalyst does—and I will confess that I owe much to the psychoanalyst—what he does is to direct thwarted, disappointed, and perplexed people to the realities of their own nature. Which they have been accustomed to ignore and forget. They come to us with high ambitions or lovely illusions about themselves, torn, shredded, spoiled. They are morally denuded. Dreams they hate pursue them; abhorrent desires draw them; they are the prey of irresistible yet uncongenial impulses; they succumb to black despairs. The first thing we ask them is this: 'What else could you expect?'"

"What else could I expect?" Sir Richmond repeated, looking down on him. "H'm!"

"The wonder is not that you are sluggish, reluctantly unselfish, inattentive, spasmodic. The wonder is that you are ever anything else. . . . Do you real-

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ise that a few million generations ago, everything that stirs in us, everything that exalts human life, self-devotions, heroisms, the utmost triumphs of art, the love—for love it is—that makes you and me care indeed for the fate and welfare of all this round world, was latent in the body of some little lurking beast that crawled and hid among the branches of vanished and forgotten Mesozoic trees? A petty egg-laying, bristle-covered beast it was, with no more of the rudiments of a soul than bare hunger, weak lust, and fear. . . . People always seem to regard that as a curious fact of no practical importance. It isn't: it's a vital fact of the utmost practical importance. That is what you are made of. Why should you expect—because a war and a revolution have shocked you—that you should suddenly be able to reach up and touch the sky?"

"H'm!" said Sir Richmond. "Have I been touching the sky?"

"You are trying to play the part of an honest rich man."

"I don't care to see the whole system go smash."

"Exactly," said the doctor, before he could prevent himself.

"But is it any good to tell a man that the job he is attempting is above him—that he is just a hairy reptile twice removed—and all that sort of thing?"

"Well, it saves him from hoping too much and being too greatly disappointed. It recalls him to the proportions of the job. He gets something done by not attempting everything. . . . And it clears him up. We get him to look into himself, to see directly and in measurable terms what it is that puts him

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wrong and holds him back. He's no longer vaguely incapacitated. He knows."

"That's diagnosis. That's not treatment."

"Treatment by diagnosis. To analyse a mental knot is to untie it."

"You propose that I shall spend my time, until the Commission meets, in thinking about myself. . . . I wanted to forget myself."

"Like a man who tries to forget that his petrol is running short and a cylinder missing fire. . . . No. Come back to the question of what you are," said the doctor. "A creature of the darkness with new lights. Lit and half blinded by science and the possibilities of controlling the world that it opens out. In that light your will is all for service; you care more for mankind than for yourself. You begin to understand something of the self beyond your self. But it is a partial and a shaded light as yet; a little area about you it makes clear, the rest is still the old darkness—of millions of intense and narrow animal generations. . . . You are like some one who awakens out of an immemorial sleep to find himself in a vast chamber in a great and ancient house, a great and ancient house high amidst frozen and lifeless mountains—in a sunless universe. You are not alone in it. You are not lord of all you survey. Your leadership is disputed. The darkness even of the room you are in is full of ancient and discarded but quite unsubjugated powers and purposes. . . . They thrust ambiguous limbs and claws suddenly out of the darkness into the light of your attention. They snatch things out of your hand, they trip your feet and jog your elbow. They crowd and cluster

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behind you. Wherever your shadow falls, they creep right up to you, creep upon you and struggle to take possession of you. The souls of apes, monkeys, reptiles, and creeping things haunt the passages and attics and cellars of this living house in which your consciousness has awakened. . . .”

The doctor gave this quotation from his unpublished book the advantages of an abrupt break and a pause.

Sir Richmond shrugged his shoulders and smiled. “And you propose a vermin hunt in the old tenement?”

“The modern man has to be master in his own house. He has to take stock and know what is there.”

“Three weeks of self-vivisection.”

“To begin with. Three weeks of perfect honesty with yourself. As an opening. . . . It will take longer than that if we are to go through with the job.”

“It’s a considerable—process.”

“It is.”

“Yet you shrink from simple things like drugs!”

“Self-knowledge—without anæsthetics.”

“Has this sort of thing ever done any one any good at all?”

“It has turned hundreds back to sanity and steady work.”

“How frank are we going to be? How full are we going to be? Anyhow—we can break off at any time. . . . We’ll try it. We’ll try it. . . . And so for this journey into the west of England. . . . And—if we can get there—I’m not sure that we can get there—into the secret places of my heart.”

CHAPTER THE SECOND

LADY HARDY

THE patient left the house with much more self-possession than he had shown when entering it. Dr. Martineau had thrust him back from his intenser prepossessions to a more generalised view of himself, had made his troubles objective and detached him from them. He could even find something amusing now in his situation. He liked the immense scope of the theoretical duet in which they had indulged. He felt that most of it was entirely true—and, in some untraceable manner, absurd. There were entertaining possibilities in the prospect of the doctor drawing him out—he himself partly assisting and partly resisting.

He was a man of extensive reservations. His private life was in some respects exceptionally private.

"I don't confide. . . . Do I even confide in myself? I imagine I do. . . . Is there anything in myself that I haven't looked squarely in the face? . . . How much are we going into? Even as regards facts?"

"Does it really help a man—to see himself? . . ."

Such thoughts engaged him until he found himself in his study. His desk and his writing-table were piled high with a heavy burthen of work. Still a little pre-occupied with Dr. Martineau's exposition, he began to handle this confusion. . . .

At half past nine he found himself with three hours of good work behind him. It had seemed like two.

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He had not worked like this for many weeks. "This is very cheering," he said. "And unexpected. Can old Moon-face have hypnotised me? Anyhow— . . . Perhaps I've only imagined I was ill. . . . Dinner?" He looked at his watch and was amazed at the time. "Good Lord! I've been at it three hours. What can have happened? Funny I didn't hear the gong."

He went down-stairs and found Lady Hardy reading a magazine in a dining-room armchair and finely poised between devotion and martyrdom. A shadow of vexation fell athwart his mind at the sight of her.

"I'd no idea it was so late," he said. "I heard no gong."

"After you swore so at poor Bradley I ordered that there should be no gongs when we were alone. I did come up to your door about half past eight. I crept up. But I was afraid I might upset you if I came in."

"But you've not waited——"

"I've had a mouthful of soup." Lady Hardy rang the bell.

"I've done some work at last," said Sir Richmond, astride on the hearth-rug.

"I'm glad," said Lady Hardy, without gladness. "I waited for two hours."

Lady Hardy was a frail little blue-eyed woman with uneven shoulders and a delicate sweet profile. Hers was that type of face that under even the most pleasant and luxurious circumstances still looks bravely and patiently enduring. Her refinement threw a tinge of coarseness over his eager consumption of his excellent clear soup.

"What's this fish, Bradley?" he asked.

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"Turbot, Sir Richmond."

"Don't you have any?" he asked his wife.

"I've had a little fish," said Lady Hardy.

When Bradley was out of the room, Sir Richmond remarked: "I saw that nerves man, Dr. Martineau, to-day. He wants me to take a holiday."

The quiet patience of the lady's manner intensified. She said nothing. A flash of resentment lit Sir Richmond's eyes. When he spoke again, he seemed to answer unspoken accusations. "Dr. Martineau's idea is that he should come with me."

The lady adjusted herself to a new point of view.

"But won't that be reminding you of your illness and worries?"

"He seems a good sort of fellow. . . . I'm inclined to like him. He'll be as good company as any one. . . . This *tournedos* looks excellent. Have some."

"I had a little bird," said Lady Hardy, "when I found you weren't coming."

"But I say—don't wait here if you've dined. Bradley can see to me."

She smiled and shook her head with the quiet conviction of one who knew her duty better. "Perhaps I'll have a little ice pudding when it comes," she said.

Sir Richmond detested eating alone in an atmosphere of observant criticism. And he did not like talking with his mouth full to an unembarrassed interlocutor who made no conversational leads of her own. After a few mouthfuls he pushed his plate away from him. "Then let's have up the ice pudding," he said with a faint note of bitterness.

"But have you finished——?"

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“The ice pudding!” he exploded wrathfully. “The ice pudding!”

Lady Hardy sat for a moment, a picture of meek distress. Then, her delicate eyebrows raised and the corners of her mouth drooping, she touched the button of the silver table-bell.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE DEPARTURE

§ 1

No wise man goes out upon a novel expedition without misgivings. And between their first meeting and the appointed morning both Sir Richmond Hardy and Dr. Martineau were the prey of quite disagreeable doubts about each other, themselves, and the excursion before them. At the time of their meeting each had been convinced that he gauged the other sufficiently for the purposes of the proposed tour. Afterwards each found himself trying to recall the other with greater distinctness and able to recall nothing but queer, ominous, and minatory traits. The doctor's impression of the great fuel specialist grew ever darker, leaner, taller, and more impatient. Sir Richmond took on the likeness of a monster obdurate and hostile, he spread upward until like the Djinn out of the bottle, he darkened the heavens. And he talked too much. He talked ever so much too much. . . .

Sir Richmond also thought that the doctor talked too much. In addition, he read into his imperfect memory of the doctor's face an expression of protruded curiosity. What was all this problem of motives and inclinations that they were "going into" so gaily? He had merely consulted the doctor on a simple, straightforward need for a nervous tonic—that was what he had needed—a tonic. Instead he had engaged himself for—he scarcely knew what—an

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indiscreet, indelicate, and altogether undesirable experiment in confidences.

Both men were considerably reassured when at last they set eyes on each other again. Indeed each was surprised to find something almost agreeable in the appearance of the other. Dr. Martineau at once perceived that the fierceness of Sir Richmond was nothing more than the fierceness of an overwrought man, and Sir Richmond realised at a glance that the curiosity of Dr. Martineau's bearing had in it nothing personal or base; it was just the fine alertness of the scientific mind.

Sir Richmond had arrived nearly forty minutes late, and it would have been evident to a much less highly trained observer than Dr. Martineau that some dissension had arisen between the little lady-like cream and black *Charmeuse* car and its owner. There was a faint air of resentment and protest between them. As if Sir Richmond had been in some way rude to it.

The cap of the radiator was adorned with a brass figure of a flying Mercury. Frozen in a sprightly attitude, its stiff bound and its fixed heavenward stare were highly suggestive of a forced and tactful disregard of current unpleasantness.

Nothing was said, however, to confirm or dispel this suspicion of a disagreement between the man and the car. Sir Richmond directed and assisted Dr. Martineau's man to adjust the luggage at the back, and Dr. Martineau watched the proceedings from his dignified front door. He was wearing a suit of fawn tweeds, a fawn Homburg hat and a light Burberry,

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with just that effect of special preparation for a holiday which betrays the habitually busy man. Sir Richmond's brown gauntness was, he noted, greatly set off by his suit of grey. There had certainly been some sort of quarrel. Sir Richmond was explaining the straps to Dr. Martineau's butler with the coldness a man betrays when he explains the uncongenial habits of some unloved intimate. And when the moment came to start and the engine did not immediately respond to the electric starter, he said: "Oh! *Come up, you——!*"

His voice sank at the last word as though it was an entirely confidential communication. It was an extremely low and disagreeable word. So Dr. Martineau decided that it was not his business to hear it. . . .

It was speedily apparent that Sir Richmond was an experienced and excellent driver. He took the Charmeuse out into the traffic of Baker Street and westward through brisk and busy streets and roads to Brentford and Hounslow smoothly and swiftly, making a score of unhesitating and accurate decisions without apparent thought. There was very little conversation until they were through Brentford. Near Shepherd's Bush, Sir Richmond had explained, "This is not my own particular car. That was butted into at the garage this morning and its radiator cracked. So I had to fall back on this. It's quite a good small car. In its way. My wife drives it at times. It has one or two constitutional weaknesses—incidental to the make—gear-box over the back axle for example—gets all the vibration. Whole machine rather on the flimsy side. Still——"

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He left the topic at that.

Dr. Martineau said something of no consequence about its being a very comfortable car.

Somewhere between Brentford and Hounslow, Sir Richmond plunged into the matter between them. "I don't know how deep we are going into these psychological probings of yours," he said. "But I doubt very much if we shall get anything out of them."

"Probably not," said Dr Martineau.

"After all, what I want is a tonic. I don't see that there is anything positively wrong with me. A certain lack of energy——"

"Lack of balance," corrected the doctor. "You are wasting energy upon internal friction."

"But isn't that inevitable? No machine is perfectly efficient. No man either. There is always a waste. Waste of the type; waste of the individual idiosyncrasy. This car, for instance, isn't pulling as she ought to pull—she never does. She's low in her class. So with myself; there is a natural and necessary high rate of energy waste. Moods of apathy and indolence are natural to me. (Damn that omnibus! All over the road!)"

"We don't deny the imperfection——" began the doctor.

"One has to fit oneself to one's circumstances," said Sir Richmond, opening up another line of thought.

"We don't deny the imperfection," the doctor stuck to it. "These new methods of treatment are based on the idea of imperfection. We begin with that. I began with that last Tuesday. . . ."

Sir Richmond, too, was sticking to his argument.

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"A man, and for that matter the world he lives in, is a tangle of accumulations. Your psychoanalyst starts, it seems to me, with a notion of stripping down to something fundamental. The ape before us was a tangle of accumulations, just as we are. So it was with his forebears. So it has always been. All life is an endless tangle of accumulations."

"Recognise it," said the doctor.

"And then?" said Sir Richmond, controversially.

"Recognise in particular your own tangle."

"Is my particular tangle very different from the general tangle? (Oh! Damn this feeble little engine!) I am a creature of undecided will, urged on by my tangled heredity to do a score of entirely incompatible things. Mankind, all life, is that."

"But our concern is the particular score of incompatible things you are urged to do. We examine and weigh— We weigh——"

The doctor was still saying these words when a violent and ultimately disastrous struggle began between Sir Richmond and the little Charmeuse car. The doctor stopped in mid-sentence.

It was near Taplow station that the mutual exasperation of man and machine was brought to a crisis by the clumsy emergence of a laundry cart from a side road. Sir Richmond was obliged to pull up smartly and stopped his engine. It refused an immediate obedience to the electric starter. Then it picked up, raced noisily, disengaged great volumes of bluish smoke, and displayed an unaccountable indisposition to run on any gear but the lowest. Sir Richmond thought aloud, unpleasing thoughts. He addressed

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the little car as a person; he referred to ancient disputes and temperamental incompatibilities. His anger betrayed him a coarse, ill-bred man. The little car quickened under his reproaches. There were some moments of hope, dashed by the necessity of going dead slow behind an interloping van. Sir Richmond did not notice the outstretched arm of the driver of the van, and stalled his engine for a second time. The electric starter refused its office altogether.

For some moments Sir Richmond sat like a man of stone.

"I must wind it up," he said at last in a profound and awful voice. "I must wind it up."

"I get out, don't I?" asked the doctor, unanswered, and did so. Sir Richmond, after a grim search and the displacement and replacement of the luggage, produced a handle from the locker at the back of the car and prepared to wind.

There was a little difficulty. "Come *up!*" he said, and the small engine roared out like a stage lion.

The two gentlemen resumed their seats. The car started and then by an unfortunate inadvertency Sir Richmond pulled the gear lever over from the first speed to the reverse. There was a metallic clangour beneath the two gentlemen, and the car slowed down and stopped although the engine was still throbbing wildly, and the dainty veil of blue smoke still streamed forward from the back of the car before a gentle breeze. The doctor got out almost precipitately, followed by a gaunt madman, mouthing vile-ness, who had only a minute or so before been a decent British citizen. He made some blind lunges

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at the tremulous but obdurate car, but rather as if he looked for offences and accusations than for displacements to adjust. Quivering and refusing, the car was extraordinarily like some recalcitrant aged aristocratic lady in the hands of revolutionaries, and this made the behaviour of Sir Richmond seem even more outrageous than it would otherwise have done. He stopped the engine, he went down on his hands and knees in the road to peer up at the gear-box, then without restoring the spark, he tried to wind up the engine again. He spun the handle with an insane violence, faster and faster for—as it seemed to the doctor—the better part of a minute. Beads of perspiration appeared upon his brow and ran together; he bared his teeth in a snarl; his hat slipped over one eye. He groaned with rage. Then, using the starting-handle as a club, he assailed the car. He smote the brazen Mercury from its foothold and sent it and a part of the radiator cap with it flying across the road. He beat at the wings of the bonnet, until they bent in under his blows. Finally he hurled the starting-handle at the wind-screen and smashed it. The starting-handle rattled over the bonnet and fell to the ground. . . .

The paroxysm was over. Ten seconds later this catclysmal lunatic had reverted to sanity—a rather sheepish sanity.

He thrust his hands into his trouser pockets and turned his back on the car. He remarked in a voice of melancholy detachment: "It was a mistake to bring that coupé."

Dr. Martineau had assumed an attitude of trained

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observation on the side path. His hands rested on his hips and his hat was a trifle on one side. He was inclined to agree with Sir Richmond. "I don't know," he considered. "You wanted some such blow-off as this."

"Did I?"

"The energy you have! That car must be somebody's whipping-boy."

"The devil it is!" said Sir Richmond, turning round sharply and staring at it as if he expected it to display some surprising and yet familiar features. Then he looked questioningly and suspiciously at his companion.

"These outbreaks do nothing to amend the originating grievance," said the doctor. "No. And at times they are even costly. But they certainly lift a burthen from the nervous system. . . . And now I suppose we have to get that little ruin to Maidenhead."

"Little ruin!" repeated Sir Richmond. "No. 'There's lots of life in it yet.'"

He reflected. "She'll have to be towed." He felt in his breast pocket. "Somewhere I have the R.A.C. order paper, the Badge that will Get You Home. We shall have to hail some passing car to take it into Maidenhead."

Dr. Martineau offered and Sir Richmond took and lit a cigarette.

For a while conversation hung fire. Then for the first time Dr. Martineau heard his patient laugh.

"Amazing savage!" said Sir Richmond. "Amazing savage!"

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He pointed to his handiwork. "The little car looks ruffled. Well it may."

He became grave again. "I suppose I ought to apologise."

Dr. Martineau weighed the situation. "As between doctor and patient," he said. "No."

"Oh!" said Sir Richmond, turned to a new point of view. "But where the patient ends and the host begins. . . . I'm really very sorry."

He reverted to his original train of thought which had not concerned Dr. Martineau at all. "After all, she was only doing what she was made to do."

§ 2

The affair of the car effectively unsealed Sir Richmond's mind. Hitherto Dr. Martineau had perceived the possibility and danger of a defensive silence or of a still more defensive irony; but now that Sir Richmond had once given himself away, he seemed prepared to give himself away to an unlimited extent. He embarked upon an apologetic discussion of the choleric temperament.

He began as they stood waiting for the relief car from the Maidenhead garage. "You were talking of the ghosts of apes and monkeys that suddenly come out from the darkness of the subconscious. . . ."

"You mean—when we first met at Harley Street?"

"That last apparition of mine seems to have been a gorilla at least."

The doctor became precise. "Gorillaesque. We are not descended from gorillas."

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“Queer thing a fit of rage is !”

“It’s one of nature’s cruder expedients. Crude, but I doubt if it is fundamental. There doesn’t seem to be rage in the vegetable world, and even among the animals—? No, it is not universal.” He ran his mind over classes and orders. “Wasps and bees certainly seem to rage, but if one comes to think, most of the invertebrata show very few signs of it.”

“I’m not so sure,” said Sir Richmond. “I’ve never seen a snail in a towering passion or an oyster slamming its shell behind it. But these are sluggish things. Oysters sulk, which is after all a smouldering sort of rage. And take any more active invertebrate. Take a spider. Not a smashing and swearing sort of rage perhaps, but a disciplined, cold-blooded malignity. . . . Crabs fight. . . . A conger-eel in a boat will rage—dangerously.”

“A vertebrate. Yes. But even among the vertebrata; who has ever seen a furious rabbit?”

“Don’t the bucks fight?” questioned Sir Richmond.

Dr. Martineau admitted the point.

“I’ve always had these fits of passion. As far back as I can remember. I was a kicking, screaming child. I threw things. I once threw a fork at my elder brother and it stuck in his forehead, doing no serious damage—happily. There were whole days of wrath—days, as I remember them. Perhaps they were only hours. . . . I’ve never thought before what a peculiar thing all this raging is in the world. *Why* do we rage? They used to say it was the devil. If it isn’t the devil, then what the devil is it?

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"After all," he went on as the doctor was about to answer his question; "as you pointed out, it isn't the lowlier things that rage. It's the *higher* things and *us*."

"The devil nowadays," the doctor reflected after a pause, "so far as man is concerned, is understood to be the ancestral ape. And more particularly the old male ape."

But Sir Richmond was away on another line of thought. "Life itself, flaring out. Brooking no contradiction." He came round suddenly to the doctor's qualification. "Why male? Don't little girls smash things just as much?"

"They don't," said Dr. Martineau. "Not nearly as much."

Sir Richmond went off at a tangent again. "I suppose you have watched any number of babies?"

"Not nearly as many as a general practitioner would do. There's a lot of rage about most of them at first, male or female."

"Queer little eddies of fury. . . . Recently—it happens—I've been seeing one. A spit of red wrath, clenching its fists and squalling threats at a damned disobedient universe."

The doctor was struck by an idea and glanced quickly and questioningly at his companion's profile.

"Blind driving force," said Sir Richmond, musing.

"Isn't that after all what we really are?" he asked the doctor. "Essentially—Rage. A rage in dead matter, making it alive."

"Schopenhauer," footnoted the doctor. "Boehme."

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"Plain fact," said Sir Richmond. "No Rage—no Go."

"But rage without discipline?"

"Discipline afterwards. The rage first."

"But rage against what? And *for* what?"

"Against the Universe. And for—? That's more difficult. What *is* the little beast squalling itself crimson for? Ultimately? . . . What is it clutching after? In the long run, what will it get?"

("Yours the car in distress what sent this?" asked an unheeded voice.)

"Of course, if you were to say 'desire,'" said Dr. Martineau, "then you would be in line with the psychoanalysts. They talk of *libido*, meaning a sort of fundamental desire. Jung speaks of it at times almost as if it were the universal driving force."

"No," said Sir Richmond, in love with his new idea. "Not desire. Desire would have a definite direction, and that is just what this driving force hasn't. It's rage."

"Yours the car in distress what sent this?" the voice repeated. It was the voice of a mechanic in an Overland car. He was holding up the blue request for assistance that Sir Richmond had recently filled in.

The two philosophers returned to practical matters.

§ 3

For half an hour after the departure of the little Charmeuse car with Sir Richmond and Dr. Martineau, the brass Mercury lay unheeded in the dusty

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roadside grass. Then it caught the eye of a passing child.

He was a bright little boy of five. From the moment when he caught the gleam of brass he knew that he had made the find of his life. But his nurse was a timorous, foolish thing. "You did ought to of left it there, Masterrarry," she said.

"Findings ain't keepings nowadays, not by no manner of means, Masterrarry.

"*Yew'd* look silly if a policeman came along arsting people if they seen a goldennimage.

"Arst yer 'ow you come by it and look pretty straight at you."

All of which grumblings Master Harry treated with an experienced disregard. He knew definitely that he would never relinquish this bright and lovely possession again. It was the first beautiful thing he had ever possessed. He was the darling of fond and indulgent parents and his nursery was crowded with hideous rag and sawdust dolls, golliwogs, comic penguins, comic lions, comic elephants, and comic policemen and every variety of suchlike humorous idiocy and visual beastliness. This figure, solid, delicate, and gracious, was a thing of a different order.

There was to be much conflict and distress, tears and wrath, before the affinity of that clean-limbed, shining figure and his small soul was recognised. But he carried his point at last. The Mercury became his inseparable darling, his symbol, his private god, the one dignified and serious thing in a life much congested by the quaint, the burlesque, and all the smiling, dull condescensions of adult love.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

AT MAIDENHEAD

§ 1

THE Charmeuse was towed to hospital and the two psychiatrists took up their quarters at the Radiant Hotel with its pleasant lawns and graceful landing-stage at the bend towards the bridge. Sir Richmond, after some trying work at the telephone, got into touch with his own proper car. A man would bring that down in two days' time at latest, and then the detested coupé could go back to London. The day was still young, and after lunch and coffee upon a sunny lawn a boat seemed indicated. Sir Richmond astonished the doctor by going to his room, re-appearing dressed in tennis flannels and looking very well in them. It occurred to the doctor as a thing hitherto unnoted that Sir Richmond was not indifferent to his personal appearance. The doctor had no flannels, but he had brought a brown holland umbrella lined with green that he had acquired long ago in Algiers, and this served to give him something of the riverside quality.

The day was full of sunshine and the river had a Maytime animation. Pink geraniums, vivid green lawns, gay awnings, bright glass, white paint and shining metal set the tone of Maidenhead life. At lunch there had been five or six small tables with quietly affectionate couples who talked in undertones,

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a tableful of bright-coloured Jews who talked in overtones, and a family party from the Midlands, badly smitten with shyness, who did not talk at all. "A resort of honeymoon couples," said the doctor, and then rather knowingly: "Temporary honeymoons, I fancy, in one or two of the cases."

"Decidedly temporary," said Sir Richmond, considering the company—"in most of the cases anyhow. The two in the corner might be married. You never know nowadays."

He became reflective. . . .

After lunch and coffee he rowed the doctor up the river towards Cliveden

"The last time I was here," he said, returning to the subject, "I was here on a temporary honeymoon."

The doctor tried to look as though he had not thought that could be possible.

"I know my Maidenhead fairly well," said Sir Richmond. "Aquatic activities, such as rowing, punting, messing about with a boat-hook, tying up, buzzing about in motor-launches, fouling other people's boats, are merely the stage business of the drama. The ruling interests of this place are love—largely illicit—and persistent drinking. . . . Don't you think the bridge charming from here?"

"I shouldn't have thought—*drinking*," said Dr. Martineau, after he had done justice to the bridge over his shoulder.

"Yes, the place has a floating population of quiet industrious soakers. The incurable river man and the river girl end at that."

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Dr. Martineau encouraged Sir Richmond by an appreciative silence.

"If we are to explore the secret places of the heart," Sir Richmond went on, "we shall have to give some attention to this Maidenhead side of life. It is very material to my case. I have—as I have said—*been here*. This place has beauty and charm; these piled-up woods behind which my Lords Astor and Desborough keep their state, this shining mirror of the water, brown and green and sky blue, this fringe of reeds and scented rushes and forget-me-not and lilies, and these perpetually posing white swans: they make a picture. A little artificial it is true; one feels the presence of a Conservancy Board, planting the rushes and industriously nicking the swans; but none the less delightful. And this setting has appealed to a number of people as an invitation, as, in a way, a promise. They come here, responsive to that promise of beauty and happiness. They conceive of themselves here, rowing swiftly and gracefully, punting beautifully, brandishing boat-hooks with ease and charm. They look to meet here, under pleasant or romantic circumstances, other possessors and worshippers of grace and beauty. There will be glowing evenings, warm moonlight, distant voices singing. . . . There is your desire, doctor, the desire you say is the driving force of life. But reality mocks it. Boats bump and lead to coarse ungracious quarrels; rowing can be curiously fatiguing; punting involves dreadful indignities. The romance here tarnishes very quickly. Romantic encounters fail to occur; in our impatience we resort to—accosting. Chilly mists arise from the water and

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the magic of distant singing is provided, even excessively, by boat-loads of cads—with collecting dishes. When the weather keeps warm there presently arises an extraordinary multitude of gnats, and when it does not there is a need for stimulants. That is why the dreamers who come here first for a light delicious brush with love, come down at last to the Thames-side barmaid with her array of spirits and cordials as the quintessence of all desire.”

“I say,” said the doctor. “You tear the place to pieces.”

“The desires of the place,” said Sir Richmond. “I’m using the place as a symbol.”

He held his sculls awash, rippling in the water.

“The real force of life, the rage of life, isn’t here,” he said. “It’s down underneath, sulking and smouldering. Every now and then it strains and cracks the surface. This stretch of the Thames, this pleasure stretch, has in fact a curiously quarrelsome atmosphere. People scold and insult one another for the most trivial things, for passing too close, for taking the wrong side, for tying up or floating loose. Most of these notice boards on the bank show a thoroughly nasty spirit. People on the banks jeer at any one in the boats. You hear people quarrelling in boats, in the hotels, as they walk along the towing-path. There is remarkably little happy laughter here. The *rage*, you see, is hostile to this place, the *rage* breaks through. . . . The people who drift from one pub to another, drinking, the people who fuddle in the riverside hotels, are the last fugitives of pleasure, trying to forget the rage. . . .”

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"Isn't it that there is some greater desire at the back of the human mind?" the doctor suggested. "Which refuses to be content with pleasure as an end?"

"What greater desire?" asked Sir Richmond, disconcertingly.

"Oh! . . ." The doctor cast about.

"There is no such greater desire," said Sir Richmond. "You cannot name it. It is just blind drive. I admit its discontent with pleasure as an end—but has it any end of its own? At the most you can say that the rage in life is seeking its desire and hasn't found it."

"Let us help in the search," said the doctor, with an afternoon smile under his green umbrella. "Go on."

§ 2

"Since our first talk in Harley Street," said Sir Richmond, "I have been trying myself over in my mind. (We can drift down this backwater.)"

"Big these trees are," said the doctor with infinite approval.

"I am astonished to discover what a bundle of discordant motives I am. I do not seem to deserve to be called a personality. I cannot discover even a general direction. Much more am I like a taxicab in which all sorts of aims and desires have travelled to their destination and got out. Are we all like that?"

"A bundle held together by a name and address and a certain thread of memory?" said the doctor and considered. "More than that. More than that. We

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have leading ideas, associations, possessions, liabilities."

"We build ourselves a prison of circumstances that keeps us from complete dispersal."

"Exactly," said the doctor. "And there is also something, a consistency, that we call character."

"It changes."

"Consistently with itself."

"I have been trying to recall my sexual history," said Sir Richmond, going off at a tangent. "My sentimental education. I wonder if it differs very widely from yours or most men's."

"Some men are more eventful in these matters than others," said the doctor,—it sounded—wistfully.

"They have the same jumble of motives and traditions, I suspect, whether they are eventful or not. The brakes may be strong or weak but the drive is the same. I can't remember much of the beginnings of curiosity and knowledge in these matters. Can you?"

"Not much," said the doctor. "No."

"Your psychoanalysts tell a story of fears, suppressions, monstrous imaginations, symbolic replacements. I don't remember much of that sort of thing in my own case. It may have faded out of my mind. There were probably some uneasy curiosities, a grotesque dream or so perhaps; I can't recall anything of that sort distinctly now. I had a very lively interest in women, even when I was still quite a little boy, and a certain—what shall I call it?—imaginative slavishness—not towards actual women but towards something magnificently feminine. My first love——"

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Sir Richmond smiled at some secret memory. "My first love was Britannia as depicted by Tenniel in the cartoons in *Punch*. I must have been a very little chap at the time of the Britannia affair. I just clung to her in my imagination and did devoted things for her. Then I recall, later, a secret abject adoration for the white goddesses of the Crystal Palace. Not for any particular one of them that I can remember,—for all of them. But I don't remember anything very monstrous or incestuous in my childish imaginations,—such things as Freud, I understand, lays stress upon. If there was an Œdipus complex or anything of that sort in my case it has been very completely washed out again. Perhaps a child who is brought up in a proper nursery of its own and sees a lot of pictures of the nude human body, and so on, gets its mind shifted off any possible concentration upon—the domestic aspect of sex. I got to definite knowledge pretty early. By the time I was eleven or twelve."

"Normally?"

"What is normally? Decently, anyhow. Here again I may be forgetting much secret and shameful curiosity. I got my ideas into definite form out of some straightforward physiological teaching and some dissecting of rats and mice. My schoolmaster was a capable sane man in advance of his times and my people believed in him. I think much of this distorted perverse stuff that grows up in people's minds about sex and develops into evil vices and still more evil habits, is due to the mystery we make about these things."

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"Not entirely," said the doctor.

"Largely. What child under a modern upbringing ever goes through the stuffy horrors described in James Joyce's 'Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man'?"

"I've not read it."

"A picture of the Catholic atmosphere; a young soul shut up in darkness and ignorance to accumulate filth. In the name of purity and decency and under threats of hell-fire."

"Horrible!"

"Quite. A study of intolerable tensions, the tensions that make young people write unclean words in secret places."

"Yes, we certainly ventilate and sanitize in those matters nowadays. Where nothing is concealed, nothing can explode."

"On the whole I came up to adolescence pretty straight and clean," said Sir Richmond. "What stands out in my memory now is this idea of a sort of woman goddess who was very lovely and kind and powerful and wonderful. That ruled my secret imaginations as a boy, but it was very much in my mind as I grew up."

"The mother complex," said Dr. Martineau as a passing botanist might recognise and name a flower. Sir Richmond stared at him for a moment.

"It had not the slightest connection with my mother or any mother or any particular woman at all. Far better to call it the goddess complex."

"The connection is not perhaps immediately visible," said the doctor.

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"There was no connection," said Sir Richmond. "The women of my adolescent dreams were stripped and strong and lovely. They were great creatures. They came, it was clearly traceable, from pictures, sculpture—and from a definite response in myself to their beauty. My mother had nothing whatever to do with that. The women and girls about me were fussy bunches of clothes that I am sure I never even linked with that dream world of love and worship."

"Were you coeducated?"

"No. But I had a couple of sisters, one older, one younger than myself, and there were plenty of girls in my circle. I thought some of them pretty—but that was a different affair. I know that I didn't connect them with the idea of the loved and worshipped goddesses at all, because I remember when I first saw the goddess in a real human being and how amazed I was at the discovery. . . . I was a boy of twelve or thirteen. My people took me one summer to Dymchurch in Romney Marsh; in those days before the automobile had made the Marsh accessible to the Hythe and Folkestone crowds, it was a little old forgotten silent wind-bitten village crouching under the lee of the great sea-wall. At low water there were miles of sand as smooth and shining as the skin of a savage brown woman. Shining and with a texture—the very same. And one day as I was mucking about by myself on the beach, boy fashion,—there were some ribs of a wrecked boat buried in the sand near a groin and I was busy with them—a girl ran out from a tent high up on the beach and across the sands to the water. She was dressed in a tight bathing-dress

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and not in the clumsy skirts and frills that it was the custom to inflict on women in those days. Her hair was tied up in a blue handkerchief. She ran swiftly and gracefully, intent upon the white line of foam ahead. I can still remember how the sunlight touched her round neck and cheek as she went past me. She was the loveliest, most shapely thing I have ever seen—to this day. She lifted up her arms and thrust through the dazzling white and green breakers and plunged into the water and swam; she swam straight out for a long way as it seemed to me, and presently came in and passed me again on her way back to her tent, light and swift and sure. The very prints of her feet on the sand were beautiful. Suddenly I realised that there could be living people in the world as lovely as any goddess. . . . She wasn't in the least out of breath.

"That was my first human love. And I love that girl still. I doubt sometimes whether I have ever loved any one else. I kept the thing very secret. I wonder now why I have kept the thing so secret. Until now I have never told a soul about it. I resorted to all sorts of tortuous devices and excuses to get a chance of seeing her again without betraying what it was I was after."

Dr. Martineau retained a simple fondness for a story.

"And did you meet her again?"

"Never. Of course I may have seen her as a dressed-up person and not recognised her. A day or so later I was stabbed to the heart by the discovery that the tent she came out of had been taken away."

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"She had gone?"

"For ever."

Sir Richmond smiled brightly at the doctor's disappointment.

§ 3

"I was never whole-hearted and simple about sexual things," Sir Richmond resumed presently. "Never. I do not think any man is. We are too much plastered-up things, too much the creatures of a tortuous and complicated evolution."

Dr. Martineau, under his green umbrella, nodded his conceded agreement.

"This—what shall I call it?—this Dream of Women, grew up in my mind as I grew up—as something independent of and much more important than the reality of Women. It came only very slowly into relation with that. That girl on the Dymchurch beach was one of the first links, but she ceased very speedily to be real—she joined the women of dream-land at last altogether. She became a sort of legendary incarnation. I thought of these dream women not only as something beautiful but as something exceedingly kind and helpful. The girls and women I met belonged to a different creation. . . ."

Sir Richmond stopped abruptly and rowed a few long strokes.

Dr. Martineau sought information.

"I suppose," he said, "there was a sensuous element in these dreamings?"

"Certainly. A very strong one. It didn't dominate but it was a very powerful undertow."

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"Was there any tendency in all this imaginative stuff to concentrate? To group itself about a single figure, the sort of thing that Victorians would have called an ideal?"

"Not a bit of it," said Sir Richmond with conviction. "There was always a tremendous lot of variety in my mind. In fact the thing I liked least in the real world was the way it was obsessed by the idea of pairing off with one particular set and final person. I liked to dream of a blonde goddess in her own Venusberg one day, and the next I would be off over the mountains with an armed Brunhild."

"You had little thought of children?"

"As a young man?"

"Yes."

"None at all. I cannot recall a single philoprogenitive moment. These dream women were all conceived of, and I was conceived of, as being concerned in some tremendous enterprise—something quite beyond domesticity. It kept us related—gave us dignity. . . . Certainly it wasn't babies."

"All this is very interesting, very interesting, from the scientific point of view. *A priori* it is not what one might have expected. Reasoning from the idea that all instincts and natural imaginations are adapted to a biological end and seeing that sex is essentially a method of procreation, one might reasonably expect a convergence, if not a complete concentration, upon the idea of offspring. It is almost as if there were other ends to be served. It is clear that Nature has not worked this impulse out to any sight of its end. Has not perhaps troubled to do so. The instinct of

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the male for the female isn't primarily for offspring—not even in the most intelligent and far-seeing types. The desire just points to glowing satisfactions and illusions. Quite equally I think the desire of the female for the male ignores its end. Nature has set about this business in a *cheap* sort of way. She is like some pushful advertising tradesman. She isn't frank with us; she just humbugs us into what she wants with us. All very well in the early Stone Age—when the poor dear things never realised that their mutual endearments meant all the troubles and responsibilities of parentage. But *now*——!”

He shook his head sideways and twirled the green umbrella like an animated halo around his large broad-minded face.

Sir Richmond considered. “Desire has never been the chief incentive of my relations with women. Never. So far as I can analyse the thing, it has been a craving for a particular sort of life-giving companionship.”

“That I take it is Nature's device to keep the lovers together in the interest of the more or less unpremeditated offspring.”

“A poor device, if that is its end. It doesn't keep parents together; more often it tears them apart. The wife or the mistress, so soon as she is encumbered with children, becomes all too manifestly *not* the companion goddess. . . .”

Sir Richmond brooded over his sculls and thought.

“Throughout my life I have been an exceedingly busy man. I have done a lot of scientific work and some of it has been very good work. And very labori-

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ous work. I've travelled much. I've organised great business developments. You might think that my time has been fairly well filled without much philanthropy. And all the time, all the time, I've been—about women—like a thirsty beast looking for water. . . . Always. Always. All through my life.”

Dr. Martineau waited through another silence.

“I was very grave about it at first. I married young. I married very simply and purely. I was not one of those young men who sow a large crop of wild oats. I was a fairly decent youth. It suddenly appeared to me that a certain smiling and dainty girl could make herself into all the goddesses of my dreams. I had but to win her and this miracle would occur. Of course I forget now the exact things I thought and felt then, but surely I had some such persuasion. Or why should I have married her? My wife was seven years younger than myself, a girl of twenty. She was charming. She *is* charming. She is a wonderfully intelligent and understanding woman. She has made a home for me—a delightful home. I am one of those men who have no instinct for home-making. I owe my home and all the comfort and dignity of my life to her ability. I have no excuse for any misbehaviour—so far as she is concerned. None at all. By all the rules I should have been completely happy. But instead of my marriage satisfying me, it presently released a storm of long-controlled desires and imprisoned cravings. A voice within me became more and more urgent. ‘This will not do. This is not love. Where are your goddesses? This is not love.’ . . . And I was unfaithful to my wife within four

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years of my marriage. It was a sudden overpowering impulse. But I suppose the ground had been preparing for a long time. I forget now all the emotions of that adventure. I suppose at the time it seemed beautiful and wonderful. . . . I do not excuse myself. Still less do I condemn myself. I put the facts before you. So it was."

"There were no children by your marriage?"

"Your line of thought, Doctor, is too philoprogenitive. We have had three. My daughter was married two years ago. She is in America. One little boy died when he was three. The other is in India, taking up the Mardipore power scheme again now that he is out of the army. . . . No, it is simply that I was hopelessly disappointed with everything that a good woman and a decent marriage had to give me. Pure disappointment and vexation. The anticlimax to an immense expectation built up throughout an imaginative boyhood and youth and early manhood. I was shocked and ashamed at my own disappointment. I thought it mean and base. Nevertheless this orderly household into which I had placed my life, these almost methodical connubialities . . ."

He broke off in mid-sentence.

Dr. Martineau shook his head disapprovingly.

"No," he said, "it wasn't fair to your wife."

"It was shockingly unfair. I have always realised that. I've done what I could to make things up to her. . . . Heaven knows what counter-disappointments she has concealed. . . . But it is no good arguing about rights and wrongs now. This is not an apology for my life. I am telling you what happened."

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“Not for me to judge,” said Dr. Martineau. “Go on.”

“By marrying I had got nothing that my soul craved for, I had satisfied none but the most transitory desires and I had incurred a tremendous obligation. That obligation didn’t restrain me from making desperate lunges at something vaguely beautiful that I felt was necessary to me; but it did cramp and limit these lunges. So my story flops down into the comedy of the lying, cramped intrigues of a respectable married man. I was still driven by my dream of some extravagantly beautiful inspiration called love, and I sought it like an area sneak. Gods! What a story it is when one brings it all together! I couldn’t believe that the glow and sweetness I dreamt of were not in the world—somewhere. Hidden away from me. I seemed to catch glimpses of the dear lost thing, now in the corners of a smiling mouth, now in dark eyes beneath a black smoke of hair, now in a slim form seen against the sky. Often I cared nothing for the woman I made love to. I cared for the thing she seemed to be hiding from me. . . .”

Sir Richmond’s voice altered.

“I don’t see what possible good it can do to talk over these things.” He began to row and rowed perhaps a score of strokes. Then he stopped and the boat drove on with a whisper of water at the bow and over the outstretched oar-blades.

“What a muddle and mockery the whole thing is!” he cried. “What a fumbling old fool Mother Nature has been! She drives us into indignity and dishonour: and she doesn’t even get the children which

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are her only excuse for her mischief. See what a fantastic thing I am when you take the machine to pieces! I have been a busy and responsible man throughout my life. I have handled complicated public and industrial affairs not unsuccessfully and discharged quite big obligations fully and faithfully. And all the time, hidden away from the public eye, my life has been laced by the thread of these—what can one call them?—love adventures. How many? you ask. I don't know. Never have I been a whole-hearted lover; never have I been able to leave love alone. . . . Never has love left me alone.

"And as I am made," said Sir Richmond with sudden insistence, "*as I am made*—I do not believe that I could go on without these affairs. I know that you will be disposed to dispute that."

Dr. Martineau made a reassuring noise.

"These affairs are at once unsatisfying and vitally necessary. It is only latterly that I have begun to perceive this. Women *make* life for me. Whatever they touch or see or desire becomes worth while and otherwise it is not worth while. Whatever is lovely in my world, whatever is delightful, has been so conveyed to me by some woman. Without the vision they give me, I should be a hard dry industry in the world, a worker ant, a soulless rage, making much, valuing nothing."

He paused.

"You are, I think, abnormal," considered the doctor.

"Not abnormal. Excessive, if you like. Without women I am a wasting fever of distressful toil. With-

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out them there is no kindness in existence, no rest, no sort of satisfaction. The world is a battle-field, trenches, barbed wire, rain, mud, logical necessity, and utter desolation—with nothing whatever worth fighting for. Whatever justifies effort, whatever restores energy is hidden in women. . . .”

“An access of sex,” said Dr. Martineau. “This is a phase. . . .”

“It is how I am made,” said Sir Richmond.

A brief silence fell upon that. Dr. Martineau persisted. “It isn’t how you are made. We are getting to something in all this. It is, I insist, a *mood* of how you are made. A distinctive and indicative mood.”

Sir Richmond went on, almost as if he soliloquised.

“I would go through it all again. . . . There are times when the love of women seems the only real thing in the world to me. And always it remains the most real thing. I do not know how far I may be a normal man or how far I may not be, so to speak, abnormally male, but to me life has very little personal significance and no value or power until it has a woman as intermediary. Before life can talk to me and say anything that matters, a woman must be present as a medium. I don’t mean that it has no significance mentally and logically; I mean that irrationally and emotionally it has no significance. Works of art, for example, bore me, literature bores me, scenery bores me, even the beauty of a woman bores me, unless I find in it some association with a woman’s feeling. It isn’t that I can’t tell for myself that a picture is fine or a mountain-valley lovely, but that it doesn’t matter a rap to me whether it is or

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whether it isn't until there is a feminine response, a sexual motif, if you like to call it that, coming in. Whatever there is of loveliness or pride in life doesn't *live* for me until somehow a woman comes in and breathes upon it the breath of life. I cannot even rest until a woman makes holiday for me. Only one thing can I do without women and that is work, joylessly but effectively, and latterly for some reason that it is up to you to discover, Doctor, even the power of work has gone from me.

§ 4

"This afternoon brings back to me very vividly my previous visit here. It was perhaps a dozen or fifteen years ago. We rowed down this same backwater. I can see my companion's hand—she had very pretty hands with rosy palms—trailing in the water, and her shadowed face smiling quietly under her sunshade, with little faint streaks of sunlight, reflected from the ripples, dancing and quivering across it. She was one of those people who seem always to be happy and to radiate happiness.

"By ordinary standards," said Sir Richmond, "she was a thoroughly bad lot. She had about as much morality, in the narrower sense of the word, as a monkey. And yet she stands out in my mind as one of the most honest women I have ever met. She was certainly one of the kindest. Part of that effect of honesty may have been due to her open brow, her candid blue eyes, the smiling frankness of her manner. . . . But—no! She was really honest.

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"We drifted here as we are doing now. She pulled at the sweet rushes and crushed them in her hand. She adds a remembered brightness to this afternoon.

"Honest. Friendly. Of all the women I have known, this woman who was here with me came nearest to being my friend. You know, what we call virtue in a woman is a tremendous handicap to any real friendliness with a man. Until she gets to an age when virtue and fidelity are no longer urgent practical concerns, a good woman, by the very definition of feminine goodness, isn't truly herself. Over a vast extent of her being she is *reserved*. She suppresses a vast amount of her being, holds back, denies, hides. On the other hand, there is a frankness and honesty in openly bad women arising out of the admitted fact that they are bad, that they hide no treasure from you, they have no peculiarly precious and delicious secrets to keep, and no poverty to conceal. Intellectually they seem to be more manly and vigorous because they are, as people say, unsexed. Many old women, thoroughly respectable old women, have the same quality. Because they have gone out of the personal sex business. Haven't you found that?"

"I have never," said the doctor, "known what you call an openly bad woman,—at least, at all intimately. . . ."

Sir Richmond looked with quick curiosity at his companion. "You have avoided them?"

"They don't attract me."

"They repel you?"

"For me," said the doctor, "for any friendliness, a woman must be modest. . . . My habits of thought

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are old-fashioned, I suppose, but the mere suggestion about a woman that there were no barriers, no reservation, that in any fashion she might more than meet me halfway . . .”

His facial expression completed his sentence.

“Now I wonder,” whispered Sir Richmond, and hesitated for a moment before he carried the great research into the explorer’s country. “You are afraid of women?” he said, with a smile to mitigate the impertinence.

“I respect them.”

“An element of fear.”

“Well, I am afraid of them then. Put it that way if you like. Anyhow I do not let myself go with them. I have never let myself go.”

“You lose something. You lose a reality of insight.”

There was a thoughtful interval.

“Having found so excellent a friend,” said the doctor, “why did you ever part from her?”

Sir Richmond seemed indisposed to answer, but Dr. Martineau’s face remained slantingly interrogative. He had found the effective counter-attack and he meant to press it.

“I was jealous of her,” Sir Richmond admitted. “I couldn’t stand that side of it.”

§ 5

After a meditative silence the doctor became briskly professional again.

“You care for your wife,” he said. “You care very

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much for your wife. She is, as you say, your great obligation and you are a man to respect obligations. I grasp that. Then you tell me of these women who have come and gone. . . . About them too you are perfectly frank. . . . There remains some one else."

Sir Richmond stared at his physician.

"Well," he said and laughed. "I didn't pretend to have made my autobiography anything more than a sketch."

"No, but there is a special person, the current person."

"I haven't dilated on my present situation, I admit."

"From some little things that have dropped from you, I should say there is a child."

"That," said Sir Richmond after a brief pause, "is a good guess."

"Not older than three."

"Two years and a half."

"You and this lady who is, I guess, young, are separated. At any rate, you can't go to her. That leaves you at loose ends, because for some time, for two or three years at least, you have ceased to be—how shall I put it?—an emotional wanderer."

"I begin to respect your psychoanalysis."

"Hence your overwhelming sense of the necessity of feminine companionship for weary men. I guess she is a very jolly companion to be with, amusing, restful—interesting."

"H'm," said Sir Richmond. "I think that is a fair description. When she cares, that is. When she is in good form."

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"Which she isn't at present," hazarded the doctor. He exploded a mine of long-pent exasperation.

"She is the clumsiest hand at keeping well that I have ever known. Health is a woman's primary duty. But she is incapable of the most elementary precautions. She is maddeningly receptive to every infection. At the present moment, when I am ill, when I am in urgent need of help and happiness, she has let that wretched child get measles and she herself won't let me go near her because she has got something disfiguring, something nobody else could ever have or think of having, called *carbuncle*. Carbuncle!"

"It is very painful," said Dr. Martineau.

"No doubt it is," said Sir Richmond. "No doubt it is." His voice grew bitter. He spoke with deliberation. "A perfectly aimless, useless illness,—and as painful as it *can* be."

He spoke as if he slammed a door viciously. And indeed he had slammed a door. The doctor realised that for the present there was no more self-dissection to be got from Sir Richmond.

For some time Sir Richmond had been keeping the boat close up to the foaming weir to the left of the lock by an occasional stroke. Now with a general air of departure he swung the boat round and began to row down-stream towards the bridge and the Radiant Hotel.

"Time we had tea," he said.

§ 6

After tea Dr. Martineau left Sir Richmond in a chair upon the lawn, brooding darkly—apparently

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over the crime of the carbuncle. The doctor went to his room, ostensibly to write a couple of letters and put on a dinner-jacket, but really to make a few notes of the afternoon's conversation and meditate over his impressions while they were fresh.

His room proffered a comfortable armchair and into this he sank. . . . A number of very discrepant things were busy in his mind. He had experienced a disconcerting personal attack. There was a whirl of active resentment in the confusion.

"Apologetics of a rake," he tried presently.

"A common type, stripped of his intellectual dressing. Every third manufacturer from the midlands or the north has some such undertow of 'affairs.' A physiological uneasiness, an imaginative laxity, the temptations of the trip to London—weakness masquerading as a psychological necessity. The Lady of the Carbuncle seems to have got rather a hold upon him. She has kept him in order for three or four years."

The doctor scrutinised his own remarks with a judicial expression.

"I am not being fair. He ruffled me. Even if it is true, as I said, that every third manufacturer from the midlands is in much the same case as he is, that does not dismiss the case. It makes it a more important one, much more important: it makes it a type case with the exceptional quality of being self-expressive. . . . Almost too self-expressive.

"Sir Richmond does, after all, make out a sort of case for himself. . . .

"A valid case?"

The doctor sat deep in his chair, with the fingers of

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one hand apposed to the fingers of the other. "He makes me bristle because all his life and ideas challenge my way of living. . . . But if I eliminate the personal element?"

He pulled a sheet of note-paper towards him and began to jot down notes with a silver-cased pencil. Soon he discontinued writing and sat tapping his pencil-case on the table.

"The amazing selfishness of his attitude! I do not think that once—not once—has he judged any woman except as a contributor to his energy and peace of mind. . . . Except in the case of his wife. . . .

"For her his habit of respect was formed before his ideas developed. . . .

"That I think explains *her*. . . .

"What was his phrase about the unfortunate young woman with the carbuncle? . . . 'Totally useless and unnecessary illness,' was it? . . .

"Now has a man any right by any standards to use women as this man has used them?

"By any standards?"

The doctor frowned and nodded his head slowly with the corners of his mouth drawn in.

For some years now an intellectual reverie had been playing an increasing part in the good doctor's life. He was writing this book of his, writing it very deliberately and laboriously, "The Psychology of a New Age," but much more was he dreaming and thinking about it. Its publication was to mark an epoch in human thought and human affairs generally, and create a considerable flutter of astonishment in the doctor's own little world. It was to bring home to

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people some various aspects of one very startling proposition: that human society had arrived at a phase when the complete restatement of its fundamental ideas had become urgently necessary, a phase when the slow, inadequate, partial adjustments to two centuries of changing conditions had to give place to a rapid reconstruction of new fundamental ideas. And it was a fact of great value in the drama of these secret dreams that the directive force towards this fundamentally reconstructed world should be the pen of an unassuming Harley Street physician, hitherto not suspected of any great excesses of enterprise.

The written portions of this book were already in a highly polished state. They combined a limitless freedom of proposal with a smooth urbanity of manner, a tacit denial that the thoughts of one intelligent being could possibly be shocking to another. Upon this the doctor was very insistent. Conduct, he held, could never be sufficiently discreet, thought could never be sufficiently free. As a citizen one had to treat a law or an institution as a thing as rigidly right as a natural law. That, the social well-being demands. But as a scientific man, in one's stated thoughts and in public discussion, the case was altogether different. There was no offence in any possible hypothesis or in the contemplation of any possibility. Just as when one played a game one was bound to play in unquestioning obedience to the laws and spirit of the game, but if one was not playing that game then there was no reason why one should not contemplate the completest reversal of all its methods and the alteration or abandonment of every rule. Correctness of con-

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duct, the doctor held, was an imperative concomitant of all really free thinking. Revolutionary speculation is one of those things that must be divorced absolutely from revolutionary conduct. It was to the neglect of these obvious principles, as the doctor considered them, that the general muddle in contemporary marital affairs was very largely due. We left divorce-law revision to exposed adulterers and marriage reform to hot adolescents and craving spinsters driven by the furies within them to assertions that established nothing and to practical demonstrations that only left everybody thoroughly uncomfortable. Far better to leave all these matters to calm, patient men in easy chairs, weighing typical cases impartially, ready to condone, indisposed to envy.

In return for which restraint on the part of the eager and adventurous, the calm patient man was prepared in his thoughts to fly high and go far. Without giving any guarantee, of course, that he might not ultimately return to the comfortable point of inaction from which he started.

In Sir Richmond, Dr. Martineau found the most interesting and encouraging confirmation of the fundamental idea of "The Psychology of a New Age," the immediate need of new criteria of conduct altogether. Here was a man whose life was evidently ruled by standards that were at once very high and very generous. He was overworking himself to the pitch of extreme distress and apparently he was doing this for ends that were essentially unselfish. Manifestly there were many things that an ordinary industrial or political magnate would do that Sir Richmond would

not dream of doing, and a number of things that such a man would not feel called upon to do that he would regard as imperative duties. And mixed up with so much fine intention and fine conduct was this disreputable streak of intrigue and this extraordinary claim that such misconduct was necessary to continued vigour of action.

"To energy of thought it is *not* necessary," said Dr. Martineau, and considered for a time.

"Yet—certainly—I am not a man of action. I admit it. I make few decisions."

The chapters dealing with women in "The Psychology of a New Age" were still undrafted, but they had already greatly exercised the doctor's mind. He found now that the case of Sir Richmond had stirred his imagination. He sat with his hands apposed, his head on one side, and an expression of great intellectual contentment on his face while these emancipated ideas gave a sort of gala performance in his mind.

The good doctor did not dislike women, he had always guarded himself very carefully against misogyny, but he was very strongly disposed to regard them as much less necessary in the existing scheme of things than was generally assumed. Women, he conceded, had laid the foundations of social life. Through their contrivances and sacrifices and patience the fierce and lonely patriarchal family-herd of a male and his women and offspring had grown into the clan and tribe; the woven tissue of related families that constitute the human comity had been woven by the subtle, persistent protection of sons and daughters by their mothers against the intolerant, jealous,

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possessive Old Man. But that was a thing of the remote past. Little was left of those ancient struggles now but a few infantile dreams and nightmares. The greater human community, human society, was made for good. And being made, it had taken over the ancient tasks of the woman, one by one, until now in its modern forms it cherished more sedulously than she did, it educated, it housed and comforted, it clothed and served and nursed, leaving the wife privileged, honoured, protected, for the sake of tasks she no longer did and of a burthen she no longer bore. "Progress has *trivialised* women," said the doctor, and made a note of the word for later consideration.

"And woman has trivialised civilisation," the doctor tried.

"She has retained her effect of being central, she still makes the social atmosphere, she raises men's instinctive hopes of help and direction. Except," the doctor stipulated, "for a few highly developed modern types, most men find the sense of achieving her a necessary condition for sustained exertion. And there is no direction in her any more.

"She spends," said the doctor, "she just spends. She spends excitingly and competitively for her own pride and glory, she drives all the energy of men over the weirs of gain. . . .

"What are we to do with the creature?" whispered the doctor.

Apart from the procreative necessity, was woman an unavoidable evil? The doctor's untrammelled thoughts began to climb high, spin, nose-dive, and loop the loop. Nowadays we took a proper care of

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the young, we had no need for high birth-rates, quite a small proportion of women with a gift in that direction could supply all the offspring that the world wanted. Given the power of determining sex that science was slowly winning to-day, and why should we have so many women about? A drastic elimination of the creatures would be quite practicable. A fantastic world to a vulgar imagination, no doubt, but to a calmly reasonable mind by no means fantastic. But this was where the case of Sir Richmond became so interesting. Was it really true that the companionship of women was necessary to these energetic creative types? Was it the fact that the drive of life towards action, as distinguished from contemplation, arose out of sex and needed to be refreshed by the reiteration of that motive? It was a plausible proposition: it marched with all the doctor's ideas of natural selection and of the conditions of a survival that have made us what we are. It was in tune with the Freudian analyses.

"Sex not only a renewal of life in the species," noted the doctor's silver pencil; *"sex may be also a renewal of energy in the individual."*

After some musing he crossed out "sex" and wrote above it "sexual love."

"That is practically what he claims," Dr. Martineau said. "In which case we want the completest revision of all our standards of sexual obligation. We want a new system of restrictions and imperatives altogether."

It was a fixed idea of the doctor's that women were quite incapable of producing ideas in the same way

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that men do, but he believed that with suitable encouragement they could be induced to respond quite generously to such ideas. Suppose therefore we really educated the imaginations of women; suppose we turned their indubitable capacity for service towards social and political creativeness, not in order to make them the rivals of men in these fields, but their moral and actual helpers.

"A man of this sort wants a mistress-mother," said the doctor. "He wants a sort of woman who cares more for him and his work and honour than she does for child or home or clothes or personal pride.

"But are there such women?"

"Can there be such a woman?"

"His work needs to be very fine to deserve her help. But admitting its fineness? . . .

"The alternative seems to be to teach the sexes to get along without each other.

"A neutralised world. A separated world. How we should jostle in the streets! But the early Christians have tried it already. The thing is impossible.

"Very well, then, we have to make women more responsible again. In a new capacity. We have to educate them far more seriously as sources of energy—as guardians and helpers of men. And we have to suppress them far more rigorously as tempters and dissipaters. Instead of mothering babies they have to mother the race. . . ."

A vision of women made responsible floated before his eyes.

"Is that man working better since you got hold of him? If not, why not?"

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“Or again,—Jane Smith was charged with neglecting her lover to the common danger. . . . The inspector said the man was in a pitiful state, morally quite uncombed and infested with vulgar, showy ideas. . . .”

The doctor laughed, telescoped his pencil and stood up.

§ 7

It became evident after dinner that Sir Richmond also had been thinking over the afternoon's conversation.

He and Dr. Martineau sat in wide-armed cane chairs on the lawn with a wickerwork table bearing coffee-cups and little glasses between them. A few other diners chatted and whispered about similar tables but not too close to our talkers to disturb them; the dining-room behind them had cleared its tables and depressed its illumination. The moon in its first quarter hung above the sunset, sank after twilight, shone brighter and brighter among the western trees, and presently had gone, leaving the sky to an increasing multitude of stars. The Maidenhead river wearing its dusky blue draperies and its jewels of light had recovered all the magic Sir Richmond had stripped from it in the afternoon. The grave arches of the bridge, made complete circles by the reflection of the water, sustained as if by some unifying and justifying reason the erratic flat flashes and streaks and glares of traffic that fretted to and fro overhead. A voice sang intermittently and a banjo tinkled, but remotely enough to be indistinct and agreeable.

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"After all," Sir Richmond began abruptly, "the search for some sort of sexual *modus vivendi* is only a means to an end. One does not want to live for sex but only through sex. The main thing in my life has always been my work. This afternoon, under the Maidenhead influence, I talked too much of sex. I babbled. Of things one doesn't usually— . . ."

"It was very illuminating," said the doctor.

"No doubt. But a temporary phase. It is the defective bearing talks. . . . Just now—I happen to be irritated."

The darkness concealed a faint smile on the doctor's face.

"The work is the thing," said Sir Richmond. "So long as one can keep one's grip on it."

"What," said the doctor after a pause, leaning back and sending wreaths of smoke up towards the star-dusted zenith, "what is your idea of your work? I mean, how do you see it in relation to yourself—and things generally?"

"Put in the most general terms?"

"Put in the most general terms."

"I wonder if I can put it in general terms for you at all. It is hard to put something one is always thinking about in general terms or to think of it as a whole. . . . Now. . . . Fuel? . . ."

"I suppose it was my father's business interests that pushed me towards specialisation in fuel. He wanted me to have a thoroughly scientific training in days when a scientific training was less easy to get for a boy than it is to-day. And much more inspiring when you got it. My mind was framed, so to speak,

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in geology and astronomical physics. I grew up to think on that scale. Just as a man who has been trained in history and law grows to think on the scale of the Roman Empire. I don't know what your pocket-map of the universe is,—the map, I mean, by which you judge all sorts of other general ideas. To me this planet is a little ball of oxides and nickel steel; life a sort of tarnish on its surface. And we,—the minutest particles in that tarnish. Who can nevertheless, in some unaccountable way, take in the idea of this universe as one whole,—who begin to dream of taking control of it.”

“That is not a bad statement of the scientific point of view. I suppose I have much the same general idea of the world. On rather more psychological lines.”

“We think, I suppose,” said Sir Richmond, “of life as something that is only just beginning to be aware of what it is—and what it might be.”

“Exactly,” said the doctor. “Good.”

He went on eagerly. “That is precisely how I see it. You and I are just particles in the tarnish, as you call it, who are becoming dimly awake to what we are, to what we have in common. Only a very few of us have got as far even as this. . . . These others here, for example. . . .”

He indicated the rest of Maidenhead by a movement.

“Desire, mutual flattery, egotistical dreams, greedy solicitudes fill them up. They haven't begun to get out of themselves.”

“We, I suppose, have,” doubted Sir Richmond.

“We have.”

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The doctor had no doubt. He lay back in his chair, with his hands behind his head and his smoke ascending vertically to heaven. With the greatest contentment he began quoting himself. "This getting out of one's individuality—this conscious getting out of one's individuality—is one of the most important and interesting aspects of the psychology of the new age that is now dawning. As compared with any previous age. Unconsciously, of course, every true artist, every philosopher, every scientific investigator, so far as his art or thought went, has always got out of himself,—has forgotten his personal interests and become Man thinking for the whole race. And intimations of the same thing have been at the heart of most religions. But now people are beginning to get this detachment without any distinctively religious feeling or any distinctive æsthetic or intellectual impulse, as if it were a plain matter of fact. Plain matter of fact,—that we are only incidentally ourselves. That really each one of us is also the whole species, is really indeed all life."

"A part of it."

"An integral part—as sight is part of a man . . . with no absolute separation from all the rest—no more than a separation of the imagination. The whole so far as his distinctive quality goes. I do not know how this takes shape in your mind, Sir Richmond, but to me this idea of actually being life itself upon the world, a special phase of it dependent upon and connected with all other phases, and of being one of a small but growing number of people who apprehend that, and want to live in the spirit of that, is quite central. It is my fundamental idea. We—this small

but growing minority—constitute that part of life which knows and wills and tries to rule its destiny. This new realisation, the new psychology arising out of it, is a fact of supreme importance in the history of life. It is like the appearance of self-consciousness in some creature that has not hitherto had self-consciousness. And so far as we are concerned, we are the true kingship of the world. Necessarily. We who know, are the true king. . . . I wonder how this appeals to you. It is stuff I have thought out very slowly and carefully and written and approved. It is the very core of my life. . . . And yet when one comes to say these things to some one else, face to face . . . it is much more difficult to say than to write.”

Sir Richmond noted how the doctor's chair creaked as he rolled to and fro with the uneasiness of these intimate utterances.

“I agree,” said Sir Richmond presently. “One *does* think in this fashion. Something in this fashion. What one calls one's work does belong to something much bigger than ourselves.

“Something much bigger,” he expanded.

“Which something we become,” the doctor urged, “in so far as our work takes hold of us.”

Sir Richmond made no answer to this for a little while. “Of course we trail a certain egotism into our work,” he said.

“Could we do otherwise? But it has ceased to be purely egotism. It is no longer, ‘I am I’ but ‘I am part.’ . . . One wants to be an honourable part.

“You think of man upon his planet,” the doctor

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pursued. "I think of life rather as a mind that tries itself over in millions and millions of trials. But it works out to the same thing."

"I think in terms of fuel," said Sir Richmond.

He was still debating the doctor's generalisation. "I suppose it would be true to say that I think of myself as mankind on his planet, with very considerable possibilities and with only a limited amount of fuel at his disposal to achieve them. Yes. . . . I agree that I think in that way. . . . I have not thought much before of the way in which I think about things—but I agree that it is in that way. Whatever enterprises mankind attempts are limited by the sum total of that store of fuel upon the planet. That is very much in my mind. Besides that he has nothing but his annual allowance of energy from the sun."

"I thought that presently we were to get unlimited energy from atoms," said the doctor.

"I don't believe in that as a thing immediately practicable. No doubt getting a supply of energy from atoms is a theoretical possibility,—just as flying was in the time of Dædalus; probably there were actual attempts at some sort of glider in ancient Crete. But before we get to the actual utilisation of atomic energy there will be ten thousand difficult corners to turn; we may have to wait three or four thousand years for it. We cannot count on it. We haven't it in hand. There may be some impasse. All we have surely is coal and oil,—there is no surplus of wood now—only an annual growth. And water-power is income also, doled out day by day. We cannot anticipate it. Coal and oil are our only capital. They

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are all we have for great important efforts. They are a gift to mankind to use to some supreme end or to waste in trivialities. Coal is the key to metallurgy and oil to transit. When they are done we shall either have built up such a fabric of apparatus, knowledge, and social organisation that we shall be able to manage without them—or we shall have travelled a long way down the slopes of waste towards extinction. . . . To-day, in getting, in distribution, in use we waste enormously. . . . As we sit here all the world is wasting fuel—fantastically.”

“Just as mentally—educationally we waste,” the doctor interjected.

“And my job is to stop what I can of that waste, to do what I can to organise, first of all sane fuel getting and then sane fuel using. And that second proposition carries us far. Into the whole use we are making of life.

“First things first,” said Sir Richmond. “If we set about getting fuel sanely, if we do it as the deliberate, co-operative act of the whole species, then it follows that we shall look very closely into the use that is being made of it. When all the fuel getting is brought into one view as a common interest, then it follows that all the fuel burning will be brought into one view. At present we are getting fuel in a kind of scramble with no general aim. We waste and lose almost as much as we get. And of what we get, the waste is idiotic.

“I won’t trouble you,” said Sir Richmond, “with any long discourse on the ways of getting fuel in this country. But land as you know is owned in patches

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and stretches that were determined in the first place chiefly by agricultural necessities. When it was divided up among its present owners nobody was thinking about the minerals beneath. But the lawyers settled long ago that the landowner owned his land right down to the centre of the earth. So we have the superficial landlord as coal-owner trying to work his coal according to the superficial divisions, quite irrespective of the lie of the coal underneath. Each man goes for the coal under his own land in his own fashion. You get three shafts where one would suffice and none of them in the best possible place. You get the coal coming out at this point when it would be far more convenient to bring it out at that—miles away. You get boundary walls of coal between the estates, abandoned, left in the ground for ever. And each coal-owner sells his coal in his own pettifogging manner. . . . But you know of these things. You know too how we trail the coal all over the country, spoiling it as we trail it, until at last we get it into the silly coal-scuttles beside the silly, wasteful, air-poisoning, fog-creating fireplace.

“And this stuff,” said Sir Richmond, bringing his hand down so smartly on the table that the startled coffee-cups cried out upon the tray; “was given to men to give them power over metals, to get knowledge with, to get more power with. . . .”

“The oil story, I suppose, is as bad.”

“The oil story is worse. . . .”

“There is a sort of cant,” said Sir Richmond in a fierce parenthesis, “that the supplies of oil are inexhaustible—that you can muddle about with oil any-

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how. . . . Optimism of knaves and imbeciles. . . . They don't want to be pulled up by any sane considerations. . . ."

For some moments he kept silence—as if in unspeakable commination.

"Here I am with some clearness of vision—my only gift; not very clever, with a natural bad temper, and a strong sexual bias, doing what I can to get a broader handling of the fuel question—as a common interest for all mankind. And I find myself up against a lot of men, subtle men, sharp men, obstinate men, prejudiced men, able to get round me, able to get over me, able to blockade me. . . . Clever men—yes, and all of them ultimately damned—oh! utterly damned—fools. Coal-owners who think only of themselves, solicitors who think backward, politicians who think like a game of cat's-cradle, not a gleam of generosity—not a gleam."

"What particularly are you working for?" asked the doctor.

"I want to get the whole business of the world's fuel discussed and reported upon as one affair—so that some day it may be handled as one affair—in the general interest."

"The world, did you say? You meant the empire?"

"No, the world. It is all one system now. You can't work it in bits. I want to call in foreign representatives from the beginning."

"Advisory—consultative?"

"No. With powers. These things interlock now internationally both through labour and finance. The

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sooner we scrap this nonsense about an autonomous British Empire complete in itself, *contra mundum*, the better for us. A world control is fifty years overdue. Hence these disorders."

"Still,—it's rather a difficult proposition, as things are."

"Oh, Lord! don't I know it's difficult!" cried Sir Richmond in the tone of one who swears. "Don't I know that perhaps it's impossible! But it's the only way to do it. Therefore, I say, let's try to get it done. And everybody says, 'difficult, difficult,' and nobody lifts a finger to try. And the only real difficulty is that everybody for one reason or another says that it's difficult. It's against human nature. Granted! Every decent thing is. It's socialism. Who cares? Along this line of comprehensive scientific control the world has to go or it will retrogress, it will muddle and rot. . . ."

"I agree," said Dr. Martineau.

"So I want a report to admit that distinctly. I want it to go further than that. I want to get the beginnings, the germ, of a world administration. I want to set up a permanent world commission of scientific men and economists—with powers, just as considerable powers as I can give them—they'll be feeble powers at the best—but still some sort of *say* in the whole fuel supply of the world. A *say*—that may grow at last to a control. A right to collect reports and receive accounts for example, to begin with. And then the right to make recommendations. . . . You see? . . . No, the international part is not the most difficult part of it. But my beastly owners and their

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beastly lawyers won't relinquish a scrap of what they call their freedom of action. And my labour men, because I'm a fairly big coal-owner myself, sit and watch and suspect me, too stupid to grasp what I am driving at and too incompetent to get out a scheme of their own. They want a world control on scientific lines even less than the owners. They try to think that fuel production can carry an unlimited wages bill and the owners try to think that it can pay unlimited profits, and when I say: 'This business is something more than a scramble for profits and wages; it's a service and a common interest,' they stare at me—" Sir Richmond was at a loss for an image. "Like a committee in a thieves' kitchen when some one has casually mentioned the law."

"But will you ever get your Permanent Commission?"

"It can be done. If I can stick it out."

"But with the whole Committee against you!"

"The curious thing is that the whole Committee isn't against me. Every individual is. . . ."

Sir Richmond found it difficult to express. "The psychology of my Committee ought to interest you. . . . It is probably a fair sample of the way all sorts of things are going nowadays. It's curious. . . . There is not a man on that Committee who is quite comfortable within himself about the particular individual end he is there to serve. It's there I get them. They pursue their own ends bitterly and obstinately I admit, but they are bitter and obstinate because they pursue them against an internal opposition—which is on my side. They are terrified to think, if

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once they stopped fighting me, how far they might not have to go with me.”

“A suppressed world conscience in fact. This marches very closely with my own ideas——”

“A world conscience? World conscience? I don’t know. But I do know that there is this drive in nearly every member of the Committee, some drive anyhow, towards the decent thing. It is the same drive that drives me. But I am the most driven. It has turned me round. It hasn’t turned them. I go East and they go West. And they don’t want to be turned round. Tremendously, they don’t.”

“Creative undertow,” said Dr. Martineau, making notes as it were. “An increasing force in modern life. In the psychology of a new age—strengthened by education—it may play a directive part.”

“They fight every little point. But, you see, because of this creative undertow—if you like to call it that—we do get along. I am leader or whipper-in, it is hard to say which, of a bolting flock. . . . I believe they will report for a permanent world commission; I believe I have got them up to that; but they will want to make it a bureau of this League of Nations, and I have the profoundest distrust of this League of Nations. It may turn out to be a sort of side-tracking arrangement for all sorts of important world issues. And they will find they have to report for some sort of control. But there again they will shy. They will report for it and then they will do their utmost to whittle it down again. They will refuse it the most reasonable powers. They will alter the composition of the Committee so as to make it innocuous.”

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“How?”

“Get rid of the independent scientific men, load it up so far as Britain is concerned with men of the colonial politician type and tame labour representatives, balance with shady new adventurer millionaires, get in still shadier stuff from abroad, let these gentry appoint their own tame experts after their own hearts,—experts who will make merely advisory reports, which will not be published. . . .”

“They want in fact to keep the old system going under the cloak of *your* Committee, reduced to a cloak and nothing more?”

“That is what it amounts to. They want to have the air of doing right—indeed they do want to have the *feel* of doing right—and still leave things just exactly what they were before. And as I suffer under the misfortune of seeing the thing rather more clearly, I have to shepherd the conscience of the whole Committee. . . . But there is a conscience there. If I can hold out myself, I can hold the Committee.”

He turned appealingly to the doctor. “Why should I have to be the conscience of that damned Committee? Why should I do this exhausting inhuman job? . . . In their hearts these others know. . . . Only they won’t know. . . . Why should it fall on me?”

“You have to go through with it,” said Dr. Martineau.

“I have to go through with it, but it’s a hell of utterly inglorious squabbling. They bait me. They have been fighting the same fight within themselves that they fight with me. They know exactly where I am, that I too am doing my job against internal fric-

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tion. The one thing before all others that they want to do is to bring me down off my moral high horse. And I loathe the high horse. I am in a position of special moral superiority to men who are on the whole as good men as I am or better. That shows all the time. You see the sort of man I am. I've a broad streak of personal vanity. I fag easily. I'm short-tempered. I'm other things, as you perceive. When I fag I become obtuse, I repeat and bore, I get viciously ill-tempered, I suffer from an intolerable sense of ill usage. Then that ass Wagstaffe, who ought to be working with me steadily, sees his chance to be pleasantly witty. He gets a laugh round the table at my expense. Young Dent, the more intelligent of the labour men, reads me a lecture in committee manners. Old Cassidy sees *his* opening and jabs some ridiculous petty accusation at me and gets me spluttering self-defence like a fool. All my stock goes down, and as my stock goes down the chances of a good report dwindle. Young Dent grieves to see me injuring my own case. Too damned a fool to see what will happen to the report! You see if only they can convince themselves I am just a prig and an egotist and an impractical bore, they escape from a great deal more than my poor propositions. They escape from the doubt in themselves. By dismissing me they dismiss their own consciences. And then they can scamper off and be sensible little piggy-wigs and not bother any more about what is to happen to mankind in the long run. . . . Do you begin to realise the sort of fight, upside down in a dust-bin, that that Committee is for me?"

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"You have to go through with it," Dr. Martineau repeated.

"I have. If I can. But I warn you I have been near breaking point. And if I tumble off the high horse, if I can't keep going regularly there to ride the moral high horse, that Committee will slump into utter scoundrelism. It will turn out a long, inconsistent, botched, unreadable report that will back up all sorts of humbugging bargains and sham settlements. It will contain some half-baked scheme to pacify the miners at the expense of the general welfare. It won't even succeed in doing that. But in the general confusion old Cassidy will get away with a series of hauls that may run into millions. Which will last his time—damn him! And that is where we are. . . . Oh! I know! I know! . . . I must do this job. I don't need any telling that my life will be nothing and mean nothing unless I bring this thing through. . . .

"But the thanklessness of playing this lone hand!"

The doctor watched his friend's resentful black silhouette against the lights on the steely river, and said nothing for a while.

"Why did I ever undertake to play it?" Sir Richmond appealed. "Why has it been put upon me? Seeing what a poor thing I am, why am I not a poor thing altogether?"

§ 8

"I think I understand that loneliness of yours," said the doctor after an interval.

"I am *intolerable* to myself."

"And I think it explains why it is that you turn to

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women as you do. You want help; you want reassurance. And you feel they can give it."

"I wonder if it has been quite like that," Sir Richmond reflected.

By an effort Dr. Martineau refrained from mentioning the mother complex. "You want help and reassurance as a child does," he said. "Women and women alone seem capable of giving that, of telling you that you are surely right, that notwithstanding your blunders you are right; that even when you are wrong it doesn't so much matter, you are still in spirit right. They can show their belief in you as no man can. With all their being they can do that."

"Yes, I suppose they could."

"They can. You have said already that women are necessary to make things real for you."

"Not my work," said Sir Richmond. "I admit that it might be like that, but it isn't like that. It has not worked out like that. The two drives go on side by side in me. They have no logical connection. All I can say is that for me, with my bifid temperament, one makes a rest from the other, and is so far refreshment and a renewal of energy. But I do not find women coming into my work in any effectual way."

The doctor reflected further. "I suppose," he began and stopped short.

He heard Sir Richmond move in his chair, creaking an interrogation.

"You have never," said the doctor, "turned to the idea of God?"

Sir Richmond grunted and made no other answer for the better part of a minute.

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As Dr. Martineau waited for his companion to speak, a falling star streaked the deep blue above them.

"I can't believe in a God," said Sir Richmond.

"Something after the fashion of a God," said the doctor insidiously.

"No," said Sir Richmond. "Nothing that reassures."

"But this loneliness, this craving for companionship——"

"We have all been through that," said Sir Richmond. "We have all in our time lain very still in the darkness with our souls crying out for the fellowship of God, demanding some sign, some personal response. The faintest feeling of assurance would have satisfied us."

"And there has never been a response?"

"Have *you* ever had a response?"

"Once I seemed to have a feeling of exaltation and security."

"Well?"

"Perhaps I only persuaded myself that I had. I had been reading William James on religious experiences and I was thinking very much of 'Conversion.' . . . I tried to experience Conversion. . . ."

"Yes?"

"It faded."

"It always fades," said Sir Richmond with anger in his voice. "I wonder how many people there are nowadays who have passed through this last experience of ineffectual invocation, this appeal to the fading shadow of a vanished God. In the night. In utter

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loneliness. 'Answer me! Speak to me!' Does he answer? In the silence you hear the little blood-vessels whisper in your ears. You see a faint glow of colour on the darkness. . . ."

Dr. Martineau sat without a word.

"I can believe that over all things Righteousness rules. I can believe that. But Righteousness is not friendliness nor mercy nor comfort nor any such dear and intimate things. This cuddling up to Righteousness! It is a dream, a delusion, and a phase. I've tried all that long ago. I've given it up long ago. I've grown out of it. Men do—after forty. Our souls were made in the squatting-place of the submen of ancient times. They are made out of primitive needs and they die before our bodies as those needs are satisfied. Only young people have souls, complete. The need for a personal God, feared but reassuring, is a youth's need. I no longer fear the Old Man nor want to propitiate the Old Man nor believe he matters any more. I'm a bit of an Old Man myself I discover. Yes. . . . But the other thing still remains."

"The Great Mother of the Gods," said Dr. Martineau—still clinging to his theories.

"The need of the woman," said Sir Richmond. "I want mating because it is my nature to mate. I want fellowship because I am a social animal—and I want it from another social animal. Not from any God—any inconceivable God. Who fades and disappears. No. . . ."

"Perhaps that other need will fade presently. I do not know. Perhaps it lasts as long as life does. How can I tell? . . ."

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He was silent for a little while. Then his voice sounded in the night, as if he spoke to himself. "But as for the God of All Things consoling and helping! Imagine it! That up there—having fellowship with me! I would as soon think of cooling my throat with the Milky Way or shaking hands with those stars."

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

IN THE LAND OF THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLES

§ 1

A GUST of confidence on the part of a person naturally or habitually reserved will often be followed by a phase of recoil. At breakfast next morning their overnight talk seemed to both Sir Richmond and Dr. Martineau like something each had dreamt about the other, a quite impossible excess of intimacy. They discussed the weather, which seemed to be settling down to the utmost serenity of which the English spring is capable, they talked of Sir Richmond's coming car and of the possible routes before them. Sir Richmond produced the Michelin maps which he had taken out of the pockets of the little *Charmeuse*. The Bath Road lay before them, he explained, Reading, Newbury, Hungerford, Marlborough, Silbury Hill which overhangs Avebury. Both travellers discovered a common excitement at the mention of Avebury and Silbury Hill. Both took an intelligent interest in archæology. Both had been greatly stimulated by the recent work of Elliot Smith and Rivers upon what was then known as the Heliolithic culture. It had revived their interest in Avebury and Stonehenge. The doctor moreover had been reading Hippisley Cox's "Green Roads of England."

Neither gentleman had ever seen Avebury, but Dr. Martineau had once visited Stonehenge.

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"Avebury is much the oldest," said the doctor. "They must have made Silbury Hill long before 2000 B. C. It may be five thousand years old or even more. It is the most important historical relic in the British Isles. And the most neglected."

They exchanged archæological facts. The secret places of the heart rested until the afternoon.

Then Sir Richmond saw fit to amplify his confessions in one particular.

§ 2

The doctor and his patient had discovered a need for exercise as the morning advanced. They had walked by the road to Marlow and had lunched at a riverside inn, returning after a restful hour in an arbour on the lawn of this place to tea at Maidenhead. It was as they returned that Sir Richmond took up the thread of their overnight conversation again.

"In the night," he said, "I was thinking over the account I tried to give you of my motives. A lot of it was terribly out of drawing."

"Facts?" asked the doctor.

"No, the facts were all right. It was the atmosphere, the proportions. . . . I don't know if I gave you the effect of something Don Juanesque? . . ."

"Vulgar poem," said the doctor remarkably. "I discounted that."

"Vulgar!"

"Intolerable. Byron in sexual psychology is like a stink in a kitchen."

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Sir Richmond perceived he had struck upon the sort of thing that used to be called a pet aversion.

"I don't want you to think that I run about after women in an habitual and systematic manner. Or that I deliberately hunt them in the interests of my work and energy. Your questions had set me theorising about myself. And I did my best to improvise a scheme of motives yesterday. It was, I perceive, a jerry-built scheme, run up at short notice. My nocturnal reflections convinced me of that. I put reason into things that are essentially instinctive. The truth is that the wanderings of desire have no single drive. All sorts of motives come in, high and low, down to sheer vulgar imitativeness and competitiveness. What was true in it all was this, that a man in a fatigue phase with any imagination falls naturally into these complications because they are more attractive to his type and far easier and more refreshing to the mind, at the outset, than anything else. And they do work a sort of recovery in him. They send him back to his work refreshed—so far, that is, as his work is concerned."

"At the *outset* they are easier," said the doctor.

Sir Richmond laughed. "When one is fagged it is only the outset counts. The more tired one is the more readily one moves along the line of least resistance. . . .

"That is one foot-note to what I said. So far as the motive of my work goes, I think we got something like the spirit of it. What I said about that was near the truth of things. . . .

"But there is another set of motives altogether,"

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Sir Richmond went on with an air of having cleared the ground for his real business, "that I didn't go into at all yesterday."

He considered. "It arises out of these other affairs. Before you realise it your affections are involved. I am a man much swayed by my affections."

Dr. Martineau glanced at him. There was a note of genuine self-reproach in Sir Richmond's voice.

"I get fond of people. It is quite irrational, but I get fond of them. Which is quite a different thing from the admiration and excitement of falling in love. Almost the opposite thing. They cry or they come some mental or physical cropper and hurt themselves, or they do something distressingly little and human and suddenly I find they've *got* me. I'm distressed. I'm filled with something between pity and an impulse of responsibility. I become tender towards them. I am impelled to take care of them. I want to ease them off, to reassure them, to make them stop hurting at any cost. I don't see why it should be the weak and sickly and seamy side of people that grips me most, but it is. I don't know why it should be their failures that gives them power over me, but it is. I told you of this girl, this mistress of mine, who is ill just now. *She's* got me in that way; she's got me tremendously."

"You did not speak of her yesterday with any morbid excess of pity," the doctor was constrained to remark.

"I abused her very probably. I forget exactly what I said. . . ."

The doctor offered no assistance.

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"But the reason why I abuse her is perfectly plain. I abuse her because she distresses me by her misfortunes and instead of my getting anything out of her, I go out to her. But I *do* go out to her. All this time at the back of my mind I am worrying about her. She has that gift of making one feel for her. I am feeling that damned carbuncle almost as if it had been my affair instead of hers

"That carbuncle has made me suffer—*frightfully*. . . . Why should I? It isn't mine."

He regarded the doctor earnestly. The doctor controlled a strong desire to laugh.

"I suppose the young lady—" he began.

"Oh! *she* puts in suffering all right. I've no doubt about that.

"I suppose," Sir Richmond went on, "now that I have told you so much of this affair, I may as well tell you all. It is a sort of comedy, a painful comedy, of irrelevant affections. . . ."

The doctor was prepared to be a good listener. Facts he would always listen to; it was only when people told him their theories that he would interrupt with his "Exactly."

"This young woman is a person of considerable genius. I don't know if you have seen in the illustrated papers a peculiar sort of humorous illustrations usually with a considerable amount of bite in them over the name of Martin Leeds?"

"Extremely amusing stuff."

"It is that Martin Leeds. I met her at the beginning of her career. She talks almost as well as she draws. She amused me immensely. I'm not the sort

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of man who waylays and besieges women and girls. I'm not the pursuing type. But I perceived that in some odd way I attracted her, and I was neither wise enough nor generous enough not to let the thing develop."

"H'm," said Dr. Martineau.

"I'd never had to do with an intellectually brilliant woman before. I see now that the more imaginative force a woman has, the more likely she is to get into a state of extreme self-abandonment with any male thing upon which her imagination begins to crystallise. Before I came along she'd mixed chiefly with a lot of young artists and students, all doing nothing at all except talk about the things they were going to do. I suppose I profited by the contrast, being older and with my hands full of affairs. Perhaps something had happened that had made her recoil towards my sort of thing. I don't know. But she just let herself go at me."

"And you?"

"Let myself go too. I'd never met anything like her before. It was her wit took me. It didn't occur to me that she wasn't my contemporary and as able as I was. As able to take care of herself. All sorts of considerations that I should have shown to a sillier woman I never dreamt of showing to her. I had never met any one so mentally brilliant before or so helpless and headlong. And so here we are on each other's hands!"

"But the child?"

"It happened to us. For four years now things have just happened to us. All the time I have been

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overworking, first at explosives and now at this fuel business. She too is full of her work. Nothing stops that though everything seems to interfere with it. And in a distraught, preoccupied way we are abominably fond of each other. 'Fond' is the word. But we are both too busy to look after either ourselves or each other.

"She is much more incapable than I am," said Sir Richmond as if he delivered a weighed and very important judgment.

"You see very much of each other?"

"She has a flat in Chelsea and a little cottage in South Cornwall, and we sometimes snatch a few days together, away somewhere in Surrey or up the Thames or at such a place as Southend where one is lost in a crowd of inconspicuous people. When things go well—they usually go well at the start—we are glorious companions. She is happy, she is creative, she will light up a new place with flashes of humour, with a keenness of appreciation. . . ."

"But things do not always go well?"

"Things," said Sir Richmond with the deliberation of a man who measures his words, "are apt to go wrong. . . . At the flat there is constant trouble with the servants; they bully her. A woman is more entangled with servants than a man. Women in that position seem to resent the work and freedom of other women. Her servants won't leave her in peace as they would leave a man; they make trouble for her. . . . And when we have had a few days anywhere away, even if nothing in particular has gone wrong——"

Sir Richmond stopped short.

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"When they go wrong it is generally her fault?" the doctor sounded.

"Almost always."

"But if they don't?" said the psychiatrist.

"It is difficult to describe. . . . The essential incompatibility of the whole thing comes out."

The doctor maintained his expression of intelligent interest.

"She wants to go on with her work. She is able to work anywhere. All she wants is just cardboard and ink. My mind on the other hand turns back to the Fuel Commission. . . ."

"Then any little thing makes trouble."

"Any little thing makes trouble. And we always drift round to the same discussion; whether we ought really to go on together."

"It is you begin that?"

"Yes, I start that. You see she is perfectly contented when I am about. She is as fond of me as I am of her."

"Fonder perhaps."

"I don't know. But she is—adhesive. Emotionally adhesive. All she wants to do is just to settle down when I am there and go on with her work. But then, you see, there is *my* work."

"Exactly. . . . After all it seems to me that your great trouble is not in yourselves but in social institutions. Which haven't yet fitted themselves to people like you two. It is the sense of uncertainty makes her, as you say, adhesive. Nervously so. If we were indeed living in a new age instead of the moral ruins of a shattered one——"

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"We can't alter the age we live in," said Sir Richmond a little testily.

"No. Exactly. But we *can* realise, in any particular situation, that it is not the individuals to blame but the misfit of ideas and forms and prejudices."

"No," said Sir Richmond, obstinately rejecting this pacifying suggestion; "she could adapt herself. If she cared enough."

"But how?"

"She will not take the slightest trouble to adjust herself to the peculiarities of our position. . . . She could be cleverer. Other women are cleverer. Any other woman almost would be cleverer than she is."

"But if she was cleverer, she wouldn't be the genius she is. She would just be any other woman."

"Perhaps she would," said Sir Richmond darkly and desperately. "Perhaps she would. Perhaps it would be better if she was."

Dr. Martineau raised his eyebrows in a furtive aside.

"But here you see that it is that in my case, the fundamental incompatibility between one's affections and one's wider conception of duty and work comes in. We cannot change social institutions in a year or a lifetime. We can never change them to suit an individual case. That would be like suspending the laws of gravitation in order to move a piano. As things are, Martin is no good to me, no help to me. She is a rival to my duty. She feels that. She is hostile to my duty. A definite antagonism has developed. She feels and treats fuel and everything to do with fuel as a bore. It is an attack. We quarrel on that. It isn't as though

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I found it so easy to stick to my work that I could disregard her hostility. And I can't bear to part from her. I threaten it, I distress her excessively and then I am overcome by sympathy for her and I go back to her. . . . In the ordinary course of things I should be with her now."

"If it were not for the carbuncle?"

"If it were not for the carbuncle. She does not care for me to see her disfigured. She does not understand"—Sir Richmond was at a loss for a phrase—"that it is not her good looks."

"She won't let you go to her?"

"It amounts to that. . . . And soon there will be all the trouble about educating the girl. Whatever happens, she must have as good a chance as—any one. . . ."

"Ah! That is worrying you too!"

"Frightfully at times. If it were a boy it would be easier. It needs constant tact and dexterity to fix things up. Neither of us have any. It needs attention. . . ."

Sir Richmond mused darkly.

Dr. Martineau thought aloud. "An incompetent delightful person with Martin Leeds' sense of humour. And her powers of expression. She must be attractive to many people. She could probably do without you. If once you parted."

Sir Richmond turned on him eagerly.

"You think I ought to part from her? On her account?"

"On her account. It might pain her. But once the thing was done——"

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"I want to part. I believe I ought to part."

"Well?"

"But then my affection comes in."

"That extraordinary—*tenderness* of yours?"

"I'm afraid."

"Of what?"

"Any one might get hold of her—if I let her down. She hasn't a tithe of the ordinary cool-headed calculation of an average woman. . . . I've a duty to her genius. I've got to take care of her."

To which the doctor made no reply.

"Nevertheless the idea of parting has been very much in my mind lately."

"Letting her go free?"

"You can put it in that way if you like."

"It might not be a fatal operation for either of you."

"And yet there are moods when parting is an intolerable idea. When one is invaded by a flood of affection. . . . And old habits of association."

Dr. Martineau thought. Was that the right word, —affection? Perhaps it was.

They had come out on the towing-path close by the lock and they found themselves threading their way through a little crowd of boating people and lookers-on. For a time their conversation was broken. Sir Richmond resumed it.

"But this is where we cease to be Man on his Planet and all the rest of it. This is where the idea of a definite task, fanatically followed to the exclusion of all minor considerations, breaks down. When the work is good, when we are sure we are all right, then we

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may carry off things with a high hand. But the work isn't always good, we aren't always sure. We blunder, we make a muddle, we are fatigued. Then the sacrificed affections come in as accusers. Then it is that we want to be reassured."

"And then it is that Miss Martin Leeds——?"

"Doesn't," Sir Richmond snapped.

Came a long pause.

"And yet——"

"It is extraordinarily difficult to think of parting from Martin."

§ 3

In the evening after dinner Dr. Martineau sought, rather unsuccessfully, to go on with the analysis of Sir Richmond.

But Sir Richmond was evidently a creature of moods. Either he regretted the extent of his confidences or the slight irrational irritation that he felt at waiting for his car affected his attitude towards his companion, or Dr. Martineau's tentatives were ill chosen. At any rate he would not rise to any conversational bait that the doctor could devise. The doctor found this the more regrettable because it seemed to him that there was much to be worked upon in this Martin Leeds affair. He was inclined to think that she and Sir Richmond were unduly obsessed by the idea that they had to stick together because of the child, because of the look of the thing and so forth, and that really each might be struggling against a very strong impulse indeed to break off the affair. It seemed evident to the doctor that they jarred upon

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and annoyed each other extremely. On the whole separating people appealed to the doctor's mind more strongly than bringing them together. Accordingly he framed his inquiries so as to make the revelation of a latent antipathy as easy as possible.

He made several not very well-devised beginnings. At the fifth Sir Richmond was suddenly conclusive. "It's no use," he said, "I can't fiddle about any more with my motives to-day."

An awkward silence followed. On reflection Sir Richmond seemed to realise that this sentence needed some apology. "I admit," he said, "that this expedition has already been a wonderfully good thing for me. These confessions have made me look into all sorts of things—squarely. But——

"I'm not used to talking about myself or even thinking directly about myself. What I say, I afterwards find disconcerting to recall. I want to alter it. I can feel myself wallowing into a mess of modifications and qualifications."

"Yes, but——"

"I want a rest anyhow. . . ."

There was nothing for Dr. Martineau to say to that.

The two gentlemen smoked for some time in a slightly uncomfortable silence. Dr. Martineau cleared his throat twice and lit a second cigar. They then agreed to admire the bridge and think well of Maidenhead. Sir Richmond communicated hopeful news about his car, which was to arrive the next morning before ten—he'd just ring the fellow up presently to make sure—and Dr. Martineau retired early and went

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rather thoughtfully to bed. The spate of Sir Richmond's confidences, it was evident, was over.

§ 4

Sir Richmond's car arrived long before ten, brought down by a young man in a state of scared alacrity—Sir Richmond had done some vigorous telephoning before turning in,—the Charmeuse set off in a repaired and chastened condition to town, and after a leisurely breakfast our two investigators into the springs of human conduct were able to resume their westward journey. They ran through scattered Twyford with its pleasant-looking inns and through the commonplace urbanities of Reading, by Newbury and Hungerford's pretty bridge and up long wooded slopes to Savernake forest, where they found the road heavy and dusty, still in its war-time state, and so down a steep hill to the wide market street which is Marlborough. They lunched in Marlborough and went on in the afternoon to Silbury Hill, that British pyramid, the largest artificial mound in Europe. They left the car by the roadside and clambered to the top and were very learned and inconclusive about the exact purpose of this vast heap of chalk and earth, this heap that men had made before the temples at Karnak were built or Babylon had a name.

Then they returned to the car and ran round by a winding road into the wonder of Avebury. They found a clean little inn there kept by pleasant people, and they garaged the car in the cow-shed and took two rooms for the night that they might the better get

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the atmosphere of the ancient place. Wonderful indeed it is, a vast circumvallation that was already two thousand years old before the dawn of British history; a great wall of earth with its ditch most strangely on its inner and not on its outer side; and within this enclosure gigantic survivors of the great circles of unhewn stone that, even as late as Tudor days, were almost complete. A whole village, a church, a pretty manor-house have been built for the most part out of the ancient megaliths; the great wall is sufficient to embrace them all with their gardens and paddocks; four crossroads meet at the village centre. There are drawings of Avebury before these things arose there, when it was a lonely wonder on the plain; but the worst of the destruction was already done before the *Mayflower* sailed. To the southward stands the cone of Silbury Hill; its shadow creeps up and down the intervening meadows as the seasons change. Around this lonely place rise the Downs, now bare sheep-pastures, in broad undulations, with a wart-like barrow here and there; and from it radiate, creeping up to gain and hold the crests of the hills, the abandoned trackways of that forgotten world. These trackways, these green roads of England, these roads already disused when the Romans made their highway past Silbury Hill to Bath, can still be traced for scores of miles through the land, running to Salisbury and the English Channel, eastward to the crossing at the Straits and westward to Wales, to ferries over the Severn, and south-westward into Devon and Cornwall.

The doctor and Sir Richmond walked round the walls, surveyed the shadow cast by Silbury upon the

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river flats, strolled up the down to the northward to get a general view of the village, had tea and smoked round the walls again in the warm April sunset. The matter of their conversation remained prehistoric. Both were inclined to find fault with the archæological work that had been done on the place. "Clumsy treasure-hunting," Sir Richmond said. "They bore into Silbury Hill and expect to find a mummified chief or something sensational of that sort, and they don't, and they report—nothing. They haven't sifted finely enough; they haven't thought subtly enough. These walls of earth ought to tell what these people ate, what clothes they wore, what woods they used. Was this a sheep land then as it is now, or a cattle land? Were these hills covered by forests? I don't know. These archæologists don't know. Or if they do they haven't told me,—which is just as bad. I don't believe they know.

"What trade came here along these tracks? So far as I know, they had no beasts of burthen. But suppose one day some one were to find a potsherd here from early Knossos, or a fragment of glass from Pepi's Egypt."

The place had stirred up his imagination. He wrestled with his ignorance as if he thought that by talking he might presently worry out some picture of this forgotten world, without metals, without beasts of burthen, without letters, without any sculpture that has left a trace, and yet with a sense of astronomical fact clear enough to raise the great gnomon of Silbury, and with a social system complex enough to give the large and orderly community to which the size of Avebury

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witnesses and the traffic to which the green roads testify.

The doctor had not realised before the boldness and liveliness of his companion's mind. Sir Richmond insisted that the climate must have been moister and milder in those days; he covered all the downlands with woods, as Savernake was still covered; beneath the trees he restored a thicker, richer soil. These people must have done an enormous lot with wood. This use of stones here was a freak. It was the very strangeness of stones here that had made them into sacred things. One thought too much of the stones of the Stone Age. Who would carve these lumps of quartzite when one could carve good oak? Or beech—a most carvable wood. Especially when one's sharpest chisel was a flint. "It's wood we ought to look for," said Sir Richmond. "Wood and fibre." He declared that these people had their tools of wood, their homes of wood, their gods and perhaps their records of wood. "A peat bog here, even a few feet of clay, might have pickled some precious memoranda. . . . No such luck. . . ." Now in Glastonbury marshes one found the life of the early iron age—half-way to our own times—quite beautifully pickled.

Though they wrestled mightily with the problem, neither Sir Richmond nor the doctor could throw a gleam of light upon the riddle why the ditch was inside and not outside the great wall.

"And what was our Mind like in those days?" said Sir Richmond. "That, I suppose, is what interests you. A vivid childish mind, I guess, with not a suspicion as yet that it was Man ruling his Planet or anything of that sort."

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The doctor pursed his lips. "None," he delivered judicially. "If one were able to recall one's childhood—at the age of about twelve or thirteen—when the artistic impulse so often goes into abeyance and one begins to think in a troubled, monstrous way about God and Hell, one might get something like the mind of this place."

"Thirteen. You put them at that—already? . . . These people, you think, were religious?"

"Intensely. In that personal way that gives death a nightmare terror. And as for the fading of the artistic impulse, they've left not a trace of the paintings and drawings and scratchings of the Old Stone people who came before them."

"Adults with the minds of thirteen-year-old children. Thirteen-year-old children with the strength of adults—and no one to slap them or tell them not to. . . . After all, they probably only thought of death now and then. And they never thought of fuel. They supposed there was no end to that. So they used up their woods and kept goats to nibble and kill the new undergrowth. . . . *Did* these people have goats?"

"I don't know," said the doctor. "So little is known."

"Very like children they must have been. The same unending days. They must have thought that the world went on for ever—just as they knew it—like my damned Committee does. . . . With their fuel wasting away and the climate changing imperceptibly, century by century. . . . Kings and important men followed one another here for centuries and centuries. . . . They had lost their past and had no idea of any future. . . . They had forgotten how they

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came into the land . . . When I was a child I believed that my father's garden had been there for ever. . . .

"This is very like trying to remember some game one played when one was a child. It is like coming on something that one built up with bricks and stones in some forgotten part of the garden. . . ."

"The life we lived here," said the doctor, "has left its traces in traditions, in mental predispositions, in still unanalysed fundamental ideas."

"Archæology is very like remembering," said Sir Richmond. "Presently we shall remember a lot more about all this. We shall remember what it was like to live in this place, and the long journey hither, age by age out of the south. We shall remember the sacrifices we made and the crazy reasons why we made them. We sowed our corn in blood here. We had strange fancies about the stars. Those we brought with us out of the south where the stars are brighter. And what like were those wooden gods of ours? I don't remember. . . . But I could easily persuade myself that I had been here before."

They stood on the crest of the ancient wall and the setting sun cast long shadows of them athwart a field of springing wheat.

"Perhaps we shall come here again," the doctor carried on Sir Richmond's fancy; "after another four thousand years or so, with different names and fuller minds. And then I suppose that this ditch won't be the riddle it is now."

"Life didn't seem so complicated then," Sir Richmond mused. "Our muddles were unconscious. We

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drifted from mood to mood and forgot. There was more sunshine then, more laughter perhaps, and blacker despair. Despair like the despair of children that can weep itself to sleep. . . . It's over. . . . Was it battle and massacre that ended that long afternoon here? Or did the woods catch fire some exceptionally dry summer, leaving black hills and famine? Or did strange men bring a sickness—measles, perhaps, or the black death? Or was it cattle pest? Or did we just waste our woods and dwindle away before the new peoples that came into the land across the southern sea? I can't remember. . . .”

Sir Richmond turned about. “I would like to dig up the bottom of this ditch here foot by foot—and dry the stuff and sift it—very carefully. . . . Then I might begin to remember things.”

§ 5

In the evening, after a pleasant supper, they took a turn about the walls with the moon sinking over beyond Silbury, and then went in and sat by lamplight before a brightly fussy wood-fire and smoked. There were long intervals of friendly silence.

“I don't in the least want to go on talking about myself,” said Sir Richmond abruptly.

“Let it rest then,” said the doctor generously.

“To-day, among these ancient memories, has taken me out of myself wonderfully. I can't tell you how good Avebury has been for me. This afternoon half my consciousness has seemed to be a tattooed creature wearing a knife of stone. . . .”

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"The healing touch of history."

"And for the first time my damned Committee has mattered scarcely a rap."

Sir Richmond stretched himself in his chair and blinked cheerfully at his cigar smoke.

"Nevertheless," he said, "this confessional business of yours has been an excellent exercise. It has enabled me to get outside myself, to look at myself as a Case. Now I can even see myself as a remote Case. That I needn't bother about further. . . . So far as that goes, I think we have done all that there is to be done."

"I shouldn't say that—quite—yet," said the doctor.

"I don't think I'm a subject for real psychoanalysis at all. I'm not an overlaid sort of person. When I spread myself out there is not much indication of a suppressed wish or of anything masked or buried of that sort. What you get is a quite open and recognised discord of two sets of motives."

The doctor considered. "Yes, I think that is true. Your *libido* is, I should say, exceptionally free. Generally you are doing what you want to do—overdoing, in fact, what you want to do—and getting simply tired."

"Which is the theory I started with. I am a case of fatigue under irritating circumstances with very little mental complication or concealment."

"Yes," said the doctor. "I agree. You are not a case for psychoanalysis, strictly speaking, at all. You are in open conflict with yourself upon moral and social issues. Practically open. Your problems are problems of conscious conduct."

"As I said."

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"Of what renunciations you have consciously to make."

Sir Richmond did not answer that. . . .

"This pilgrimage of ours," he said, presently, "has made for magnanimity. This day particularly has been a good day. When we stood on this old wall here in the sunset I seemed to be standing outside myself in an immense still sphere of past and future. I stood with my feet upon the Stone Age and saw myself four thousand years away, and all my distresses as very little incidents in that perspective. Away there in London the case is altogether different; after three hours or so of the Committee one concentrates into one little inflamed moment of personality. There is no past any longer, there is no future, there is only the rankling dispute. For all those three hours, perhaps, I have been thinking of just what I had to say, just how I had to say it, just how I looked while I said it, just how much I was making myself understood, how I might be misunderstood, how I might be misrepresented, challenged, denied. One draws in more and more as one is used up. At last one is reduced to a little raw, bleeding, desperately fighting pin-point of *self*. . . . One goes back to one's home unable to recover. Fighting it over again. All night sometimes. . . . I get up and walk about the room and curse. . . . Martineau, how is one to get the Avebury frame of mind to Westminster?"

"When Westminster is as dead as Avebury," said the doctor, unhelpfully. He added after some seconds, "Milton knew of these troubles. 'Not without dust and heat,' he wrote—a great phrase."

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"But the dust chokes me," said Sir Richmond.

He took up a copy of "The Green Roads of England" that lay beside him on the table. But he did not open it. He held it in his hand and said the thing he had had in mind to say all that evening. "I do not think that I shall stir up my motives any more for a time. Better to go on into the west country cooling my poor old brain in these wide shadows of the past."

"I can prescribe nothing better," said Dr. Martineau. "Incidentally, we may be able to throw a little more light on one or two of your minor entanglements."

"I don't want to think of them," said Sir Richmond. "Let me get right away from everything. Until my skin has grown again."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

THE ENCOUNTER AT STONEHENGE

- § 1

NEXT day in the early afternoon after a farewell walk over the downs round Avebury they went by way of Devizes and Netheravon and Amesbury to Stonehenge.

Dr. Martineau had seen this ancient monument before, but now, with Avebury fresh in his mind, he found it a poorer thing than he had remembered it to be. Sir Richmond was frankly disappointed. After the real greatness and mystery of the older place, it seemed a poor little heap of stones; it did not even dominate the landscape; it was some way from the crest of the swelling down on which it stood and it was further dwarfed by the colossal airship hangars and clustering offices of the air station that the great war had called into existence upon the slopes to the south-west. "It looks," Sir Richmond said, "as though some old giantess had left a discarded set of teeth on the hillside." Far more impressive than Stonehenge itself were the barrows that capped the neighbouring crests.

The sacred stones were fenced about, and our visitors had to pay for admission at a little kiosk by the gate. At the side of the road stood a travel-stained middle-class automobile, with a miscellany of dusty

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luggage, rugs and luncheon things therein—a family automobile with father no doubt at the wheel. Sir Richmond left his own trim coupé at its tail.

They were impeded at the entrance by a difference of opinion between the keeper of the turnstile and a small but resolute boy of perhaps five or six who proposed to leave the enclosure. The custodian thought that it would be better if his nurse or his mother came out with him.

“She keeps on looking at it,” said the small boy. “It isunt anything. I want to go and clean the car.”

“You won’t see Stonehenge every day, young man,” said the custodian, a little piqued.

“It’s only an old beach,” said the small boy, with extreme conviction. “It’s rocks like the seaside. And there isunt no sea.”

The man at the turnstile mutely consulted the doctor.

“I don’t see that he can get into any harm here,” the doctor advised, and the small boy was released from archæology.

He strolled to the family automobile, produced an *en-tout-cas* pocket-handkerchief and set himself to polish the lamps with great assiduity. The two gentlemen lingered at the turnstile for a moment or so to watch his proceedings. “Modern child,” said Sir Richmond. “Old stones are just old stones to him. But motor-cars are gods.”

“You can hardly expect him to understand—at his age,” said the custodian, jealous for the honor of Stonehenge. . . .

“Reminds me of Martin’s little girl,” said Sir Rich-

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mond, as he and Dr. Martineau went on towards the circle. "When she encountered her first dragon-fly she was greatly delighted. 'Oh, dee' lill' a'eplane,' she said."

As they approached the grey old stones they became aware of a certain agitation among them. A voice, an authoritative bass voice, was audible, crying, "Anthony!" A nurse appeared remotely going in the direction of the aeroplane sheds, and her cry of "Master Anthony" came faintly on the breeze. An extremely pretty young woman of five or six and twenty became visible standing on one of the great prostrate stones in the centre of the place. She was a black-haired, sunburned individual and she stood with her arms akimbo, quite frankly amused at the disappearance of Master Anthony, and offering no sort of help for his recovery. On the greensward before her stood the paterfamilias of the family automobile, and he was making a trumpet with his hands in order to repeat the name of Anthony with greater effect. A short lady in grey emerged from among the encircling megaliths, and one or two other feminine personalities produced effects of movement rather than of individuality as they flitted among the stones. "Well," said the lady in grey, with that rising intonation of humorous conclusion which is so distinctively American, "those Druids have *got* him."

"He's hiding," said the automobilist, in a voice that promised chastisement to a hidden hearer. "That's what he's doing. He ought not to play tricks like this. A great boy who is almost six."

"If you are looking for a small, resolute boy of six,"

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said Sir Richmond, addressing himself to the lady on the rock rather than to the angry parent below, "he's perfectly safe and happy. The Druids haven't got him. Indeed, they've failed altogether to get him. 'Stonehenge,' he says, 'is no good.' So he's gone back to clean the lamps of your car."

"Aa-oo. So *that's* it!" said Papa. "Winnie, go and tell Price he's gone back to the car. . . . They oughtn't to have let him out of the enclosure. . . ."

The excitement about Master Anthony collapsed. The rest of the people in the circles crystallised out into the central space as two apparent sisters and an apparent aunt and the nurse, who was packed off at once to supervise the lamp-cleaning. The head of the family found some difficulty, it would seem, in readjusting his mind to the comparative innocence of Anthony, and Sir Richmond and the young lady on the rock sought as if by common impulse to establish a general conversation. There were faint traces of excitement in her manner, as though there had been some controversial passage between herself and the family gentleman.

"We were discussing the age of this old place," she said, smiling in the frankest and friendliest way. "How old do *you* think it is?"

The father of Anthony intervened, also with a shadow of controversy in his manner. "I was explaining to the young lady that it dates from the early bronze age. Before chronology existed. . . . But she insists on dates."

"Nothing of bronze has ever been found here," said Sir Richmond.

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"Well, when was this early bronze age, anyhow?" said the young lady.

Sir Richmond sought a recognisable datum. "Bronze got to Britain somewhere between the times of Moses and Solomon."

"Ah!" said the young lady, as who should say, "This man at least talks sense."

"But these stones are all shaped," said the father of the family. "It is difficult to see how that could have been done without something harder than stone."

"I don't *see* the place," said the young lady on the stone. "I can't imagine how they did it up—not one bit."

"*Did it up!*" exclaimed the father of the family in the tone of one accustomed to find a gentle sport in the intellectual frailties of his womenkind.

"It's just the bones of a place. They hung things round it. They draped it."

"But what things?" asked Sir Richmond.

"Oh! they had things all right. Skins perhaps. Mats of rushes. Bast cloth. Fibre of all sorts. Wadded stuff."

"Stonehenge draped! It's really a delightful idea," said the father of the family, enjoying it.

"It's quite a possible one," said Sir Richmond.

"Or they may have used wicker," the young lady went on, undismayed. She seemed to concede a point. "Wicker *is* likelier."

"But surely," said the father of the family, with the expostulatory voice and gesture of one who would recall erring wits to sanity, "it is far more impressive

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standing out bare and noble as it does. In lonely splendour."

"But all this country may have been wooded then," said Sir Richmond. "In which case it wouldn't have stood out. It doesn't stand out so very much even now."

"You came to it through a grove," said the young lady, eagerly picking up the idea.

"Probably beech," said Sir Richmond.

"Which may have pointed to the midsummer sunrise," said Dr. Martineau, unheeded.

"These are *novel* ideas," said the father of the family in the reproving tone of one who never allows a novel idea inside *his* doors if he can prevent it.

"Well," said the young lady, "I guess there was some sort of show here anyhow. And no human being ever had a show yet without trying to shut people out of it in order to make them come in. I guess this was covered in all right. A dark hunched old place in a wood. Beech stems, smooth, like pillars. And they came to it at night, in procession, beating drums, and scared half out of their wits. They came in *there* and went round the inner circle with their torches. And so they were shown. The torches were put out and the priests did their mysteries. Until dawn broke. That's how they worked it."

"But even you can't tell what the show was, V. V.," said the lady in grey, who was standing now at Dr. Martineau's elbow.

"Something horrid," said Anthony's younger sister to her elder in a stage whisper.

"*Bluggy*," agreed Anthony's elder sister to the

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younger, in a noiseless voice that certainly did not reach father. "*Squeals!* . . ."

This young lady who was addressed as "V. V." was perhaps one or two and twenty, Dr. Martineau thought,—he was not very good at feminine ages. She had a clear sun-browned complexion, with dark hair and smiling lips. Her features were finely modelled, with just that added touch of breadth in the brow and softness in the cheek-bones, that faint flavour of the Amerindian, one sees at times in American women. Her voice was a very soft and pleasing voice, and she spoke persuasively and not assertively as so many American women do. Her determination to make the dry bones of Stonehenge live shamed the doctor's disappointment with the place. And when she had spoken, Dr. Martineau noted that she looked at Sir Richmond as if she expected him at least to confirm her vision. Sir Richmond was evidently prepared to confirm it.

With a queer little twinge of infringed proprietorship, the doctor saw Sir Richmond step up on the prostrate megalith and stand beside her, the better to appreciate her point of view. He smiled down at her. "Now why do you think they came in *there?*" he asked.

The young lady was not very clear about her directions. She did not know of the roadway running to the Avon River, nor of the alleged race-course to the north, nor had she ever heard that the stones were supposed to be of two different periods and that some of them might possibly have been brought from a very great distance.

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§ 2

Neither Dr. Martineau nor the father of the family found the imaginative reconstruction of the Stonehenge rituals quite so exciting as the two principals. The father of the family endured some further particulars with manifest impatience, no longer able, now that Sir Richmond was encouraging the girl, to keep her in check with the slightly derisive smile proper to her sex. Then he proclaimed in a fine loud tenor, "All this is very imaginative, I'm afraid." And to his family, "Time we were pressing on. Turps, we must go-o. Come, Phoebe!"

As he led his little flock towards the exit his voice came floating back. "Talking wanton nonsense. . . . Any professional archæologist would laugh, simply laugh. . . ."

He passed out of the world.

With a faint intimation of dismay Dr. Martineau realised that the two talkative ladies were not to be removed in the family automobile with the rest of the party. Sir Richmond and the younger lady went on very cheerfully to the population, agriculture, housing, and general scenery of the surrounding Downland during the later Stone Age. The shorter, less attractive lady, whose accent was distinctly American, came now and stood at the doctor's elbow. She seemed moved to play the part of chorus to the two upon the stone.

"When V. V. gets going," she remarked, "she makes things come alive."

Dr. Martineau hated to be addressed suddenly by

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strange ladies. He started, and his face assumed the distressed politeness of the moon at its full. "Your friend," he said, "interested in archæology?"

"Interested!" said the stouter lady. "Why! She's a fiend at it. Ever since we came on Carnac."

"You've visited Carnac?"

"That's where the bug bit her," said the stout lady with a note of querulous humour. "Directly V. V. set eyes on Carnac, she just turned against all her upbringing. 'Why wasn't I told of this before?' she said. 'What's Notre Dame to this?' This is where we came from. This is the real starting-point of the *Mayflower*. Belinda," she said, "we've got to see all we can of this sort of thing before we go back to America. They've been keeping this from us." And that's why we're here right now instead of being shopping in Paris or London like decent American women."

The younger lady looked down on her companion with something of the calm, expert attention that a plumber gives to a tap that is misbehaving, and like a plumber refrained from precipitate action. She stood with the backs of her hands resting on her hips. "Well," she said slowly, giving most of the remark to Sir Richmond and the rest to the doctor. "It is nearer the beginnings of things than London or Paris."

"And nearer to us," said Sir Richmond.

"I call that—just paradoxical," said the shorter lady, who appeared to be called Belinda.

"Not paradoxical," Dr. Martineau contradicted gently. "Life is always beginning again. And this is a time of fresh beginnings."

"Now that's after V. V.'s own heart," cried the

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stout lady in grey. "She'll agree to all that. She's been saying it right across Europe. Rome, Paris, London; they're simply just done. They don't signify any more. They've got to be cleared away."

"You let me tell my own opinions, Belinda," said the young lady who was called V. V. "I said that if people went on building with fluted pillars and Corinthian capitals for two thousand years, it was time they were cleared up and taken away."

"Corinthian capitals?" Sir Richmond considered it and laughed cheerfully. "I suppose Europe does rather overdo that sort of thing."

"The way she went on about the Victor Emanuel Monument!" said the lady who answered to the name of Belinda. "It gave me cold shivers to think that those Italian officers might understand English."

The lady who was called V. V. smiled as if she smiled at herself, and explained herself to Sir Richmond. "When one is travelling about, one gets to think of history and politics in terms of architecture. I do anyhow. And those columns with Corinthian capitals have got to be a sort of symbol for me for everything in Europe that I don't want and have no sort of use for. It isn't a bad sort of capital in its way, florid and pretty, but not a patch on the Doric;—and that a whole continent should come up to it and stick at it and never get past it! . . ."

"It's the classical tradition."

"It puzzles me."

"It's the Roman Empire. That Corinthian column is a weed spread by the Romans all over western Europe."

"And it smothers the history of Europe. You can't

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see Europe because of it. Europe is obsessed by Rome. Everywhere Marble Arches and *Arcs de Triomphe*. You never get away from it. It is like some old gentleman who has lost his way in a speech and keeps on repeating the same thing. And can't sit down. 'The empire, gentlemen—Empire. Empire.' Rome itself is perfectly frightful. It stares at you with its great round stupid arches as though it couldn't imagine that you could possibly want anything else for ever. Saint Peter's and that frightful Monument are just the same stuff as the Baths of Caracalla and the palaces of the Cæsars. Just the same. They will make just the same sort of ruins. It goes on and goes on."

"*Ave Roma Immortalis*," said Dr. Martineau.

"This Roman Empire seems to be Europe's first and last idea. A fixed idea. And such a poor idea! . . . America never came out of that. It's no good telling me that it did. It escaped from it. . . . So I said to Belinda here, 'Let's burrow, if we can, under all this marble and find out what sort of people we were before this Roman Empire and its acanthus weeds got hold of us.'"

"I seem to remember at Washington something faintly Corinthian, something called the Capitol," Sir Richmond reflected. "And other buildings. A Treasury."

"That's different," said the young lady, so conclusively that it seemed to leave nothing more to be said on that score.

"A last twinge of Europeanism," she vouchsafed. "We were young in those days."

"You are well beneath the marble here."

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She assented cheerfully.

"A thousand years before it."

"Happy place! Happy people!"

"But even this place isn't the beginning of things here. Carnac was older than this. And older still is Avebury. Have you heard in America of Avebury? It may have predated this place, they think, by another thousand years."

"Avebury?" said the lady who was called Belinda.

"But what is this Avebury?" asked V. V. "I've never heard of the place."

"I thought it was a lord," said Belinda.

Sir Richmond, with occasional appeals to Dr. Martineau, embarked upon an account of the glory and wonder of Avebury. Possibly he exaggerated Avebury. . . .

It was Dr. Martineau who presently brought this disquisition upon Avebury to a stop by a very remarkable gesture. He looked at his watch. He drew it out ostentatiously, a thick, respectable gold watch, for the doctor was not the sort of man to wear his watch upon his wrist. He clicked it open and looked at it. Thereby he would have proclaimed his belief this encounter was an entirely unnecessary interruption of his healing duologue with Sir Richmond, which must now be resumed.

But this action had scarcely the effect he had intended it to have. It set the young lady who was called Belinda asking about ways and means of getting to Salisbury; it brought to light the distressing fact that V. V. had the beginnings of a chafed heel. Once he had set things going they moved much too

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quickly for the doctor to deflect their course. He found himself called upon to make personal sacrifices to facilitate the painless transport of the two ladies to Salisbury, where their luggage awaited them at the *Old George Hotel*. In some way too elusive to trace, it became evident that he and Sir Richmond were to stay at this same *Old George Hotel*. The luggage was to be shifted to the top of the coupé, the young lady called V. V. was to share the interior of the car with Sir Richmond, while the lady named Belinda, for whom Dr. Martineau was already developing a very strong dislike, was to be thrust into an extreme proximity with him and the balance of the luggage in the dicky seat behind.

Sir Richmond had never met with a young woman with a genuine historical imagination before, and he was evidently very greatly excited and resolved to get the utmost that there was to be got out of this encounter.

§ 3

Sir Richmond displayed a complete disregard of the sufferings of Dr. Martineau, shamefully compressed behind him. Of these he was to hear later. He ran his overcrowded little car, overcrowded so far as the dicky went, over the crest of the Down and down into Amesbury and on to Salisbury, stopping to alight and stretch the legs of the party when they came in sight of Old Sarum.

"Certainly they can do with a little stretching," said Dr. Martineau grimly.

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This charming young woman had seized upon the imagination of Sir Richmond to the temporary exclusion of all other considerations. The long Downland gradients, quivering very slightly with the vibration of the road, came swiftly and easily to meet and pass the throbbing little car as he sat beside her and talked to her. He fell into that expository manner which comes so easily to the native entertaining the visitor from abroad.

"In England, it seems to me there are four main phases of history. Four. Avebury, which I would love to take you to see to-morrow. Stonehenge. Old Sarum, which we shall see in a moment as a great grassy mound on our right as we come over one of these crests. Each of them represents about a thousand years. Old Sarum was Keltic; it saw the Romans and the Saxons through, and for a time it was a Norman city. Now it is pasture for sheep. Latest as yet is Salisbury,—English, real English. It may last a few centuries still. It is little more than seven hundred years old. But when I think of those great hangars back there by Stonehenge, I feel that the next phase is already beginning. Of a world one will fly to the ends of, in a week or so. Our world still. Our people, your people and mine, who are going to take wing so soon now, were made in all these places. We are visiting the old homes. I am glad I came back to it just when you were doing the same thing."

"I'm lucky to have found a sympathetic fellow traveller," she said; "with a car."

"You're the first American I've ever met whose

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interest in history didn't seem—" He sought for an inoffensive word.

"Silly? Oh! I admit it. It's true of a lot of us. Most of us. We come over to Europe as if it hadn't anything to do with us except to supply us with old pictures and curios generally. We come sightseeing. It's romantic. It's picturesque. We stare at the natives—like visitors at a Zoo. We don't realise that we belong. . . . I know our style. . . . But we aren't all like that. Some of us are learning a bit better than that. We have one or two teachers over there to lighten our darkness. There's Professor Breasted, for instance. He comes sometimes to my father's house. And there's James Harvey Robinson and Professor Hutton Webster. They've been trying to restore our memory."

"I've never heard of any of them," said Sir Richmond.

"You hear so little of America over here. It's quite a large country and all sorts of interesting things happen there nowadays. And we are waking up to history. Quite fast. We shan't always be the most ignorant people in the world. We are beginning to realise that quite a lot of things happened between Adam and the *Mayflower* that we ought to be told about. I allow it's a recent revival. The United States has been like one of those men you read about in the papers who go away from home and turn up in some distant place with their memories gone. They've forgotten what their names were or where they lived or what they did for a living; they've forgotten everything that matters. Often they have to begin again and settle

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down for a long time before their memories come back. That's how it has been with us. Our memory is just coming back to us."

"And what do you find you are?"

"Europeans. Who came away from kings and churches—and Corinthian capitals."

"You feel all this country belongs to you?"

"As much as it does to you."

Sir Richmond smiled radiantly at her. "But if I say that America belongs to me as much as it does to you?"

"We are one people," she said.

"We?"

"Europe. These parts of Europe anyhow. And ourselves."

"You are the most civilised person I've met for weeks and weeks."

"Well, you are the first civilised person I've met in Europe for a long time. If I understand you."

"There are multitudes of reasonable, civilised people in Europe."

"I've heard or seen very little of them."

"They're scattered, I admit."

"And hard to find."

"So ours is a lucky meeting. I've wanted a serious talk to an American for some time. I want to know very badly what you think you are up to with the world,—our world."

"I'm equally anxious to know what England thinks she is doing. Her ways recently have been a little difficult to understand. On any hypothesis—that is honourable to her."

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"H'm," said Sir Richmond.

"I assure you we don't like it. This Irish business. We feel a sort of ownership in England. It's like finding your dearest aunt torturing the cat."

"We must talk of that," said Sir Richmond.

"I wish you would."

"It is a cat and a dog—and they have been very naughty animals. And poor Aunt Britannia almost deliberately lost her temper. But I admit she hits about in a very nasty fashion."

"And favours the dog?"

"She does."

"I want to know all you admit."

"You shall. And incidentally my friend and I may have the pleasure of showing you Salisbury and Avebury. If you are free?"

"We're travelling together, just we two. We're wandering about the south of England on our way to Falmouth. Where I join a father in a few days' time, and I go on with him to Paris. And if you and your friend are coming to the *Old George*——?"

"We are," said Sir Richmond.

"I see no great scandal in talking right on to bed-time. And seeing Avebury to-morrow. Why not? Perhaps if we did as the Germans do and gave our names now, it might mitigate something of the extreme informality of our behaviour."

"My name is Hardy. I've been a munition manufacturer. I was slightly wounded by a stray shell near Arras while I was inspecting some plant I had set up, and also I was hit by a stray knighthood. So my name is now Sir Richmond Hardy. My friend is a

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very distinguished Harley Street physician. Chiefly nervous and mental cases. His name is Dr. Martineau. He is quite as civilised as I am. He is also a philosophical writer. He is really a very wise and learned man indeed. He is full of ideas. He's stimulated me tremendously. You must talk to him."

Sir Richmond glanced over his shoulder at the subject of these commendations. Through the oval window glared an expression of malignity that made no impression whatever on his preoccupied mind.

"My name," said the young lady, "is Grammont. The war whirled me over to Europe on Red Cross work and since the peace I've been settling up things and travelling about Europe. My father is rather a big business man in New York."

"The oil Grammont?"

"He *is* rather deep in oil, I believe. He is coming over to Europe because he does not like the way your people are behaving in Mesopotamia. He is on his way to Paris now. Paris it seems is where everything is to be settled against you. Belinda is a sort of companion I have acquired for the purposes of independent travel. She was Red Cross too. I must have somebody and I cannot bear a maid. Her name is Belinda Seyffert. From Philadelphia originally. You have that? Seyffert, Grammont?"

"And Hardy?"

"Sir Richmond and Dr. Martineau."

"And—Ah!—That great green bank there just coming into sight must be Old Sarum. The little ancient city that faded away when Salisbury lifted its

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spire into the world. We will stop here for a little while. . . .”

Then it was that Dr. Martineau was grim about the stretching of his legs.

§ 4

The sudden prospect which now opened out before Sir Richmond of talking about history and suchlike topics with a charming companion for perhaps two whole days instead of going on with this tiresome, shamefaced, egotistical business of self-examination was so attractive to him that it took immediate possession of his mind, to the entire exclusion and disregard of Dr. Martineau's possible objections to any such modification of their original programme. When they arrived in Salisbury, the doctor did make some slight effort to suggest a different hotel from that in which the two ladies had engaged their rooms, but on the spur of the moment and in their presence he could produce no sufficient reason for refusing the accommodation the *Old George* had ready for him. He was reduced to a vague: “We don't want to inflict ourselves—” He could not get Sir Richmond aside for any adequate expression of his feelings about Miss Seyffert, before the four of them were seated together at tea amidst the mediæval modernity of the *Old George* smoking-room. And only then did he begin to realise the depth and extent of the engagements to which Sir Richmond had committed himself.

“I was suggesting that we run back to Avebury to-morrow,” said Sir Richmond. “These ladies were nearly missing it.”

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The thing took the doctor's breath away. For the moment he could say nothing. He stared over his teacup dour-faced.

An objection formulated itself very slowly. "But that dicky," he whispered.

His whisper went unnoted. Sir Richmond was talking of the completeness of Salisbury. From the very beginning it had been a cathedral city; it was essentially and purely that. The church at its best, in the full tide of its mediæval ascendancy, had called it into being. He was making some extremely loose and inaccurate generalisations about the buildings and ruins each age had left for posterity, and Miss Grammont was countering with equally unsatisfactory qualifications. "Our age will leave the ruins of hotels," said Sir Richmond. "Railway arches and hotels."

"Baths and aqueducts," Miss Grammont compared. "Rome of the Empire comes nearest to it. . . ."

As soon as tea was over, Dr. Martineau realised, they meant to walk round and about Salisbury. He foresaw that walk with the utmost clearness. In front and keeping just a little beyond the range of his intervention, Sir Richmond would go with Miss Grammont; he himself and Miss Seyffert would bring up the rear. "If I do," he muttered, "I'll be damned!"—an unusually strong expression for him.

"You said—?" asked Miss Seyffert.

"That I have some writing to do—before the post goes," said the doctor brightly.

"Oh! *come* and see the cathedral!" cried Sir Richmond with ill-concealed dismay. He was, if one may

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so put it in the directest fashion, *not* looking at Miss Seyffert when he said this.

"I'm afraid," said the doctor mulishly. "Impossible."

(With the unspoken addition of, "*You try her for a bit.*")

Miss Grammont stood up. Everybody stood up. "We can go first to look for shops," she said. "There's those things you want to buy, Belinda; a fountain pen and the little books. We can all go together as far as that. And while you are shopping, if you wouldn't mind getting one or two things for me. . . ."

It became clear to Dr. Martineau that Sir Richmond was to be let off Belinda. It seemed abominably unjust. And it was also clear to him that he must keep closely to his own room or he might find Miss Seyffert drifting back alone to the hotel and eager to resume with him. . . .

Well, a quiet time in his room would not be disagreeable. He could think over his notes. . . .

But in reality he thought over nothing but the little speeches he would presently make to Sir Richmond about the unwarrantable, the absolutely unwarrantable, alterations that were being made without his consent in their common programme. . . .

For a long time Sir Richmond had met no one so interesting and amusing as this frank-minded young woman from America. "Young woman" was how he thought of her; she didn't correspond to anything so prim and restrained and extensively reserved and withheld as a "young lady"; and though he judged her no older than five-and-twenty, the word "girl,"

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with its associations of virginal ignorances, invisible purdah, and trite ideas newly discovered, seemed even less appropriate for her than the word "boy." She had an air of having in some obscure way graduated in life, as if so far she had lived each several year of her existence in a distinctive and conclusive manner with the utmost mental profit and no particular tarnish or injury. He could talk with her as if he talked with a man like himself—but with a zest no man could give him.

It was evident that the good things she had said at first came as the natural expression of a broad stream of alert thought; they were no mere display specimens from one of those jackdaw collections of bright things so many clever women waste their wits in accumulating. She was not talking for effect at all; she was talking because she was tremendously interested in her discovery of the spectacle of history, and delighted to find another person as possessed as she was.

Belinda having been conducted to her shops, the two made their way through the bright evening sunlight to the compact gracefulness of the cathedral. A glimpse through a wrought-iron gate of a delightful garden of spring flowers, alyssum, aubrietia, snow-upon-the-mountains, daffodils, narcissus, and the like, held them for a time, and then they came out upon the level grassy space, surrounded by little ripe old houses, on which the cathedral stands. They stood for some moments surveying it.

"It's a perfect little lady of a cathedral," said Sir Richmond. "But why, I wonder, did we build it?"

"Your memory ought to be better than mine," she

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said, with her half-closed eyes blinking up at the sunlit spire sharp against the blue. "I've been away for so long—over there—that I forget altogether. Why *did* we build it?"

She had fallen in quite early with this freak of speaking and thinking as if he and she were all mankind. It was as if her mind had been prepared for it by her own eager exploration in Europe "My friend, the philosopher," he had said, "will not have it that we are really the individuals we think we are. You must talk to him—he is a very curious and subtle thinker. We are just thoughts in the Mind of the Race, he says, passing thoughts We are—what does he call it?—Man on his Planet, taking control of life."

"Man and woman," she had amended.

But just as man on his planet taking control of life had failed altogether to remember why the ditch at Avebury was on the inside instead of the outside of the vallum, so now Miss Grammont and Sir Richmond found very great difficulty in recalling why they had built Salisbury Cathedral.

"We built temples by habit and tradition," said Sir Richmond. "But the impulse was losing its force."

She looked up at the spire and then at him with a faintly quizzical expression.

But he had his reply ready.

"We were beginning to feel our power over matter. We were already very clever engineers. What interested us here wasn't the old religion any more. We wanted to exercise and display our power over stone. We made it into reeds and branches. We squirted it up in all these spires and pinnacles. The priest and

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his altar were just an excuse. Do you think people have ever feared and worshipped in this—this artist's lark—as they did in Stonehenge?"

"I certainly do not remember that I ever worshipped here," she said.

Sir Richmond was in love with his idea. "The spirit of the Gothic cathedrals," he said, "is the spirit of the skyscrapers. It is architecture in a mood of flaming ambition. The Freemasons on the building could hardly refrain from jeering at the little priest they had left down below there, performing antiquated puerile mysteries at his altar. He was just their excuse for doing it all."

"Skyscrapers?" she conceded. "An early display of the skyscraper spirit. . . . You are doing your best to make me feel thoroughly at home."

"You are more at home here still than in that new country of ours over the Atlantic. But it seems to me now that I do begin to remember building this cathedral—and all the other cathedrals we built in Europe. . . . It was the fun of building made us do it. . . ."

"H'm," she said. "And my skyscrapers?"

"Still the fun of building. That is the thing I envy most about America. It's still large enough, mentally and materially, to build all sorts of things. . . . Over here, the sites are frightfully crowded. . . ."

"And what do you think we are building now? And what do you think you are building over here?"

"What are we building now? I believe we have almost grown up. I believe it is time we began to build in earnest. For good. . . ."

"But are we building anything at all?"

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"A new world."

"Show it me," she said.

"We're still only at the foundations," said Sir Richmond. "Nothing shows as yet."

"I wish I could believe they were foundations."

"But can you doubt we are scrapping the old? . . ."

It was too late in the afternoon to go into the cathedral, so they strolled to and fro round and about the west end and along the path under the trees towards the river, exchanging their ideas very frankly and freely about the things that had recently happened to the world and what they thought they ought to be doing in it.

§ 5

After dinner our four tourists sat late and talked in a corner of the smoking-room. The two ladies had vanished hastily at the first dinner-gong and reappeared at the second, mysteriously and pleasantly changed from tweedy pedestrians to indoor company. They were quietly but definitely dressed, pretty alterations had happened to their coiffure, a silver band and deep red stones lit the dusk of Miss Grammont's hair and a necklace of the same colourings kept the peace between her jolly sunburned cheek and her soft untanned neck. It was evident her recent uniform had included a collar of great severity. Miss Seyffert had revealed a plump forearm and proclaimed it with a clash of bangles. Dr. Martineau thought her evening throat much too confidential.

The conversation drifted from topic to topic. It had none of the steady continuity of Sir Richmond's

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duologue with Miss Grammont. Miss Seyffert's methods were too discursive and exclamatory. She broke every thread that appeared. The *Old George* at Salisbury is really old; it shows it, and Miss Seyffert laced the entire evening with her recognition of the fact. "Just look at that old beam!" she would cry suddenly. "To think it was exactly where it is before there was a Cabot in America!"

Miss Grammont let her companion pull the talk about as she chose. After the animation of the afternoon a sort of lazy contentment had taken possession of the younger lady. She sat deep in a basket chair and spoke now and then. Miss Seyffert gave her impressions of France and Italy. She talked of the cabmen of Naples and the beggars of Amalfi.

Apropos of beggars, Miss Grammont from the depths of her chair threw out the statement that Italy was frightfully overpopulated. "In some parts of Italy it is like mites on a cheese. Nobody seems to be living. Every one is too busy keeping alive."

"Poor old women carrying loads big enough for mules," said Miss Seyffert.

"Little children working like slaves," said Miss Grammont.

"And everybody begging. Even the people at work by the roadside. Who ought to be getting wages—sufficient. . . ."

"Begging—from foreigners—is just a sport in Italy," said Sir Richmond. "It doesn't imply want. But I agree that a large part of Italy is frightfully overpopulated. The whole world is. Don't you think so, Martineau?"

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"Well—yes—for its present social organisation."

"For any social organisation," said Sir Richmond.

"I've no doubt of it," said Miss Seyffert, and added amazingly: "I'm out for Birth Control all the time."

A brief but active pause ensued. Dr. Martineau in a state of sudden distress attempted to drink out of a cold and empty coffee-cup.

"The world swarms with cramped and undeveloped lives," said Sir Richmond. "Which amount to nothing. Which do not even represent happiness. And which help to use up the resources, the fuel and surplus energy of the world."

"I suppose they have a sort of liking for their lives," Miss Grammont reflected.

"Does that matter? They do nothing to carry life on. They are just vain repetitions—imperfect—dreary, blurred repetitions of one common life. All that they feel has been felt, all that they do has been done better before. Because they are crowded and hurried and underfed and undereducated. And as for liking their lives, they need never have had the chance."

"How many people are there in the world?" she asked abruptly.

"I don't know. Twelve hundred, fifteen hundred millions perhaps."

"And in *your* world?"

"I'd have two hundred and fifty millions, let us say. At most. It would be quite enough for this little planet, for a time, at any rate. Don't you think so, Doctor?"

"I don't *know*," said Dr. Martineau. "Oddly

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enough, I have never thought about that question before. At least, not from this angle."

"But could you pick out two hundred and fifty million aristocrats?" began Miss Grammont. "My native instinctive democracy——"

"Need not be outraged," said Sir Richmond. "Any two hundred and fifty million would do. They'd be able to develop fully, all of them. As things are, only a minority can do that. The rest never get a chance."

"That's what *I* always say," said Miss Seyffert.

"A New Age," said Dr. Martineau; "a New World. We may be coming to such a stage, when population, as much as fuel, will be under a world control. If one thing, why not the other? I admit that the movement of thought is away from haphazard towards control——"

"I'm for control all the time," Miss Seyffert injected, following up her previous success.

"I admit," the doctor began his broken sentence again with marked patience, "that the movement of thought is away from haphazard towards control—in things generally. But is the movement of events?"

"The eternal problem of man," said Sir Richmond. "Can our wills prevail?"

There came a little pause.

Miss Grammont smiled an inquiry at Miss Seyffert.

"If *you* are," said Belinda.

"I wish I could imagine your world," said Miss Grammont, rising, "of two hundred and fifty millions of fully developed human beings with room to live and breathe in and no need for wars. Will they live in palaces? Will they all be healthy? . . . Machines

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will wait on them. No! I can't imagine it. Perhaps I shall dream of it. My dreaming self may be cleverer."

She held out her hand to Sir Richmond. Just for a moment they stood hand in hand, appreciatively. . . .

"Well!" said Dr. Martineau, as the door closed behind the two Americans. "This is a curious—encounter."

"That young woman has brains," said Sir Richmond, standing before the fireplace.

There was no doubt whatever which young woman he meant. But Dr. Martineau grunted.

"I don't like the American type," the doctor pronounced judicially.

"I do," Sir Richmond countered.

The doctor thought for a moment or so. "You are committed to the project of visiting Avebury?" he said.

"They ought to see Avebury," said Sir Richmond.

"H'm," said the doctor, ostentatiously amused by his thoughts and staring at the fire. "Birth Control! I *never* did."

Sir Richmond smiled down on the top of the doctor's head and said nothing.

"I think," said the doctor and paused. . . . "I shall leave this Avebury expedition to you."

"We can be back in the early afternoon," said Sir Richmond. "To give them a chance of seeing the cathedral. The chapter-house here is not one to miss. . . ."

"And then I suppose we shall go on?"

"As you please," said Sir Richmond insincerely.

"I must confess that four people make the car at

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any rate seem tremendously overpopulated. And to tell the truth, I do not find this encounter so amusing as you seem to do. . . . I shall not be sorry when we have waved good-bye to those young ladies, and resume our interrupted conversation."

Sir Richmond considered something mulish in the doctor's averted face.

"I find Miss Grammont an extremely interesting—and stimulating human being."

"Evidently."

The doctor sighed, stood up and found himself delivering one of the sentences he had engendered during his solitary meditations in his room before dinner. He surprised himself by the plainness of his speech. "Let me be frank," he said, regarding Sir Richmond squarely. "Considering the general situation of things and your position, I do not care very greatly for the part of an accessory to what may easily develop, as you know very well, into a very serious—flirtation. An absurd, mischievous, irrelevant flirtation. You may not like the word. You may pretend it is a conversation, an ordinary intellectual conversation. That is not the word. Simply that is not the word. You people eye one another. . . . Flirtation. I give the affair its proper name. That is all. Merely that. When I think— But we will not discuss it now. . . . Good night. . . . Forgive me if I put before you, rather bluntly, my particular point of view."

Sir Richmond found himself alone. With his eyebrows raised.

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§ 6

After twenty-four eventful hours our two students of human motives found themselves together again by the fireplace in the *Old George* smoking-room. They had resumed their overnight conversation, in a state of considerable tension.

"If you find the accommodation of the car insufficient," said Sir Richmond in a tone of extreme reasonableness, "and I admit it is, we can easily hire a larger car in a place like this."

"I would not care if you hired an omnibus," said Dr. Martineau. "I am not coming on if these young women are."

"But if you consider it scandalous—and really, Martineau, really! as one man to another, it does seem to me to be a bit pernicky of you, a broad and original thinker as you are——"

"Thought is one matter. Rash, inconsiderate action quite another. And above all, if I spend another day in or near the company of Miss Belinda Seyffert I shall—I shall be extremely rude to her."

"But," said Sir Richmond and bit his lower lip and considered.

"We might drop Belinda," he suggested—turning to his friend and speaking in low, confidential tones. "She is quite a manageable person. Quite. She could—for example—be left behind with the luggage and sent on by train. I do not know if you realise how the land lies in that quarter. It needs only a word to Miss Grammont."

There was no immediate reply. For a moment he

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had a wild hope that his companion would agree, and then he perceived that the doctor's silence meant only the preparation of an ultimatum.

"I object to Miss Grammont and—that side of the thing, more than I do to Miss Seyffert."

Sir Richmond said nothing.

"It may help you to see this affair from a slightly different angle if I tell you that twice to-day Miss Seyffert has asked me if you were a married man."

"And of course you told her I was."

"On the second occasion."

Sir Richmond smiled again.

"Frankly," said the doctor, "this adventure is altogether uncongenial to me. It is the sort of thing that has never happened in my life. This highway coupling——"

"Don't you think," said Sir Richmond, "that you are attaching rather too much—what shall I say—romantic?—flirtatious?—meaning to this affair? I don't mind that after my rather lavish confessions you should consider me a rather oversexed person, but isn't your attitude rather unfair,—unjust, indeed, and almost insulting, to this Miss Grammont? After all, she's a young lady of very good social position indeed. She doesn't strike you—does she?—as an undignified or helpless human being. Her manners suggest a person of considerable self-control. And knowing less of me than you do, she probably regards me as almost as safe as—a maiden aunt say. I'm twice her age. We are a party of four. There are conventions, there are considerations. . . . Aren't you really, my dear Mar-

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tineau, overdoing all this side of this very pleasant little enlargement of our interests?"

"*Am I?*" said Dr. Martineau and brought a scrutinising eye to bear on Sir Richmond's face.

"I want to go on talking to Miss Grammont for a day or so," Sir Richmond admitted.

"Then I shall prefer to leave your party."

There were some moments of silence.

"I am really very sorry to find myself in this dilemma," said Sir Richmond with a note of genuine regret in his voice.

"It is not a dilemma," said Dr. Martineau, with a corresponding loss of asperity. "I grant you we discover we differ—upon a question of taste and convenience. But before I suggested this trip, I had intended to spend a little time with my old friend Sir Kenelm Latter at Bournemouth. Nothing simpler than to go to him now. . . ."

"I shall be sorry all the same."

"I could have wished," said the doctor, "that these ladies had happened a little later. . . ."

The matter was settled. Nothing more of a practical nature remained to be said. But neither gentleman desired to break off with a harsh and bare decision.

"When the New Age is here," said Sir Richmond, "then, surely, a friendship between a man and a woman will not be subjected to the—the inconveniences your present code would set about it? They would travel about together as they chose?"

"The fundamental principle of the new age," said the doctor, "will be *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. In

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these matters. With perhaps *Fay ce que voudras* as its next injunction. So long as other lives are not affected. In matters of personal behaviour the world will probably be much more free and individuals much more open in their conscience and honour than they have ever been before. In matters of property, economics, and public conduct it will probably be just the reverse. Then, there will be much more collective control and much more insistence, legal insistence, upon individual responsibility. But we are not living in a new age yet; we are living in the patched-up ruins of a very old one. And you—if you will forgive me—are living in the patched-up remains of a life that had already had its complications. This young lady, whose charm and cleverness I admit, behaves as if the new age were already here. Well, that may be a very dangerous mistake both for her and for you. . . . This affair, if it goes on for a few days more, may involve very serious consequences indeed, with which I, for one, do not wish to be involved.”

Sir Richmond, upon the hearth-rug, had a curious feeling that he was back in the head master’s study at Caxton.

Dr. Martineau went on with a lucidity that Sir Richmond found rather trying, to give his impression of Miss Grammont and her position in life.

“She is,” he said, “manifestly a very expensively educated girl. And in many ways—interesting. I have been watching her. I have not been favoured with very much of her attention, but that fact has enabled me to see her in profile. Miss Seyffert is a fairly crude mixture of frankness, insincerity, and self-

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explanatory egotism, and I have been able to disregard a considerable amount of the conversation she has addressed to me. Now I guess this Miss Grammont has had no mother since she was quite little."

"Your guesses, Doctor, are apt to be pretty good," said Sir Richmond.

"You know that?"

"She has told me as much."

"H'm. Well— She impressed me as having the air of a girl who has had to solve many problems for which the normal mother provides ready-made solutions. That is how I inferred that there was no mother. I don't think there has been any step-mother, either friendly or hostile? There hasn't been. I thought not. She has had various governesses and companions, ladies of birth and education, engaged to look after her and she has done exactly what she liked with them. Her manner with Miss Seyffert, an excellent manner for Miss Seyffert, by-the-by, isn't the sort of manner any one acquires in a day. Or for one person only. She is a very sure and commanding young woman."

Sir Richmond nodded.

"I suppose her father adores and neglects her, and whenever she has wanted a companion or governess butchered, the thing has been done. . . . These business Americans, I am told, neglect their womenkind, give them money and power, let them loose on the world. . . . It is a sort of moral laziness masquerading as affection. . . . Still I suppose custom and tradition kept this girl in her place; and she was petted, honoured, amused, talked about but not in a harmful

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way, and rather bored right up to the time when America came into the war. Theoretically she had a tremendously good time."

"I think this must be near the truth of her biography," said Sir Richmond.

"I suppose she has lovers."

"You don't mean——?"

"No, I don't. Though that is a matter that ought to have no special interest for you. I mean that she was surrounded by a retinue of men who wanted to marry her or who behaved as though they wanted to marry her or who made her happiness and her gratifications and her condescensions seem a matter of very great importance to them. She had the flattery of an extremely uncritical and unexacting admiration. That is the sort of thing that gratifies a silly woman extremely. Miss Grammont is not silly and all this homage and facile approval probably bored her more than she realised. To any one too intelligent to be steadily excited by buying things and wearing things and dancing and playing games and going to places of entertainment, and being given flowers, sweets, jewellery, pet animals, and books bound in a special sort of leather, the prospect of being a rich man's only daughter until such time as it becomes advisable to change into a rich man's wealthy wife, is probably not nearly so amusing as envious people might suppose. I take it Miss Grammont had got all she could out of that sort of thing some time before the war, and that she had already read and thought rather more than most young women in her position. Before she was twenty I guess she was already looking for

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something more interesting in the way of men than a rich admirer with an automobile full of presents. Those who seek find."

"What do you think she found?"

"What would a rich girl find out there in America? I don't know. I haven't the material to guess with. In London a girl might find a considerable variety of active, interesting men, rising politicians, university men of distinction, artists and writers even, men of science, men—there are still such men—active in the creative work of the empire.

"In America I suppose there is at least an equal variety, made up of rather different types. She would find that life was worth while to such people in a way that made the ordinary entertainments and amusements of her life a monstrous silly waste of time. With the facility of her sex she would pick up from one of them the idea that made life worth while for him. I am inclined to think there was some one in her case who did seem to promise a sort of life that was worth while. And that somehow the war came to alter the look of that promise."

"How?"

"I don't know. Perhaps I am only romancing. But for this young woman I am convinced this expedition to Europe has meant—experience, harsh educational experience and very profound mental disturbance. There have been love experiences; experiences that were something more than the treats and attentions and proposals that made up her life when she was sheltered over there. And something more than that. What it is I don't know. The war has turned

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an ugly face to her. She has seen death and suffering and ruin. Perhaps she has seen people she knew killed. Perhaps the man has been killed. Or she has met with cowardice or cruelty or treachery where she didn't expect it. She has been shocked out of the first confidence of youth. She has ceased to take the world for granted. . . . It hasn't broken her but it has matured her. . . . That I think is why history has become real to her. Which so attracts you in her. History, for her, has ceased to be a fabric of picturesque incidents; it is the study of a tragic struggle that still goes on. She sees history as you see it and I see it. She is a very grown-up young woman. . . ."

"It's just that," said Sir Richmond. "It's just that. If you see as much in Miss Grammont as all that, why don't you want to come on with us? You see the interest of her."

"I see a lot more than that. You don't know what an advantage it is to be as I am, rather cold and unresponsive to women and unattractive and negligible—negligible, that is the exact word—to them. *You* can't look at a woman for five minutes without losing sight of her in a mist of imaginative excitement. Because she looks back at you. I have the privilege of the negligible—which is a cool head. Miss Grammont has a startled and matured mind, an original mind. Yes. And there is something more to be said. Her intelligence is better than her character."

"I don't quite see what you are driving at."

"The intelligence of all intelligent women is better than their characters. Goodness in a woman, as we understand it, seems to imply necessarily a certain

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imaginative fixity. Miss Grammont has an impulsive and adventurous character. And as I have been saying she was a spoiled child, with no discipline. . . . You also are a person of high intelligence and defective controls. She is very much at loose ends. You—on account of the illness of that rather forgotten lady, Miss Martin Leeds——”

“Aren’t you rather abusing the secrets of the confessional?”

“This *is* the confessional. It closes to-morrow morning but it is the confessional still. Look at the thing frankly. You, I say, are also at loose ends. Can you deny it? My dear sir, don’t we both know that ever since we left London you have been ready to fall in love with any pretty thing in petticoats that seemed to promise you three ha’porth of kindness. A lost dog looking for a master! You’re a stray man looking for a mistress. Miss Grammont being a woman is a little more selective than that. But if she’s at a loose end as I suppose, she isn’t protected by the sense of having made her selection. And she has no preconceptions of what she wants. You are a very interesting man in many ways. You carry marriage and—entanglements lightly. With an air of being neither married nor entangled. She is quite prepared to fall in love with you.”

“But you don’t really think that?” said Sir Richmond, with an ill-concealed eagerness.

Dr. Martineau rolled his face towards Sir Richmond. “These miracles—grotesquely—happen,” he said. “She knows nothing of Martin Leeds. . . . You must remember that. . . .

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“And then,” he added, “if she and you fall in love, as the phrase goes, what is to follow?”

There was a pause.

Sir Richmond looked at his toes for a moment or so as if he took counsel with them and then decided to take offence.

“Really!” he said, “this is preposterous. You talk of falling in love as though it was impossible for a man and woman to be deeply interested in each other—without that. And the gulf in our ages—in our quality! From the Psychologist of a New Age I find this amazing. Are men and women to go on for ever—separated by this possibility into two hardly communicating and yet interpenetrating worlds? Is there never to be friendship and companionship between men and women without passion?”

“You ought to know even better than I do that there is not. For such people as you two anyhow. And at present the world is not prepared to tolerate friendship and companionship *with* that accompaniment. That is the core of this situation.”

A pause fell between the two gentlemen. They had smoothed over the extreme harshness of their separation and there was very little more to be said.

“I am very sorry indeed, Martineau,” said Sir Richmond in conclusion, “that we have to part like this.”

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

COMPANIONSHIP

§ 1

"WELL," said Dr. Martineau, extending his hand to Sir Richmond on the Salisbury station platform, "I leave you to it."

His round face betrayed little or no vestiges of his overnight irritation.

"Ought you to leave me to it?" smiled Sir Richmond.

"I shall be interested to learn what happens."

"But if you won't stay to see!"

"Now sir, please," said the guard respectfully but firmly, and Dr. Martineau got in.

Sir Richmond walked thoughtfully down the platform towards the exit.

"What else could I do?" he asked aloud to nobody in particular.

For a little while he thought confusedly of the collapse of his expedition into the secret places of his own heart with Dr. Martineau, and then his prepossession with Miss Grammont resumed possession of his mind. Dr. Martineau was forgotten.

§ 2

For the better part of forty hours, Sir Richmond had either been talking to Miss Grammont, or carry-

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ing on imaginary conversations with her in her absence, or sleeping and dreaming dreams in which she never failed to play a part, even if at times it was an altogether amazing and incongruous part. And as they were both very frank and expressive people, they already knew a great deal about each other.

For an American Miss Grammont was by no means autobiographical. She gave no sketches of her idiosyncrasies, and she repeated no remembered comments and prophecies of her contemporaries about herself. She either concealed or she had lost any great interest in her own personality. But she was interested in and curious about the people she had met in life, and her talk of them reflected a considerable amount of light upon her own upbringing and experiences. And her liking for Sir Richmond was pleasingly manifest. She liked his turn of thought, she watched him with a faint smile on her lips as he spoke, and she spread her opinions before him carefully in that soft voice of hers like a shy child showing its treasures to some suddenly trusted and favoured visitor.

Their ways of thought harmonised. They talked at first chiefly about the history of the world and the extraordinary situation of aimlessness in a phase of ruin to which the Great War had brought all Europe, if not all mankind. The world excited them both in the same way; as a crisis in which they were called upon to do something—they did not yet clearly know what. Into this topic they peered as into some deep pool, side by side, and in it they saw each other reflected.

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The visit to Avebury had been a great success. It had been a perfect springtime day, and the little inn had been delighted at the reappearance of Sir Richmond's car so soon after its departure. Its delight was particularly manifest in the cream and salad it produced for lunch. Both Miss Grammont and Miss Seyffert displayed an intelligent interest in their food. After lunch they had all gone out to the stones and the wall. Half-a-dozen sunburned children were putting one of the partially overturned megaliths to a happy use by clambering to the top of it and sliding on their little behinds down its smooth and sloping side amidst much mirthful squealing.

Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont had walked round the old circumvallation together, but Belinda Seyffert had strayed away from them, professing an interest in flowers. It was not so much that she felt they had to be left together that made her do this as her own consciousness of being possessed by a devil who interrupted conversations. When Miss Grammont was keenly interested in a conversation, then Belinda had learned from experience that it was wiser to go off with her devil out of the range of any temptation to interrupt.

"You really think," said Miss Grammont, "that it would be possible to take this confused old world and reshape it, set it marching towards that new world of yours—of two hundred and fifty million fully developed, beautiful and happy people?"

"Why not? Nobody is doing anything with the world except muddle about. Why not give it a direction?"

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"You'd take it in your hands like clay?"

"Obdurate clay with a sort of recalcitrant, unintelligent life of its own."

Her imagination glowed in her eyes and warmed her voice. "I believe what you say is possible. If people dare."

"I am tired of following little motives that are like flames that go out when you get to them. I am tired of seeing all the world doing the same. I am tired of a world in which there is nothing great but great disasters. Here is something mankind can attempt, that we can attempt."

"And will?"

"I believe that as Mankind grows up this is the business Man has to settle down to and will settle down to."

She considered that.

"I've been getting to believe something like this. But— . . . it frightens me. I suppose most of us have this same sort of dread of taking too much upon ourselves."

"So we just live like pigs. Sensible little piggy-wiggys. I've got a Committee full of that sort of thing. We live like little modest pigs. And let the world go hang. And pride ourselves upon our freedom from the sin of presumption."

"Not quite that!"

"Well! How do you put it?"

"We are afraid," she said. "It's too vast. We want bright little lives of our own."

"Exactly—sensible little piggy-wiggys."

"We have a right to life—and happiness."

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"First," said Sir Richmond, "as much right as a pig has to food. But whether we get life and happiness or fail to get them we human beings who have imaginations want something more nowadays. . . . Of course we want bright lives, of course we want happiness. Just as we want food, just as we want sleep. But when we have eaten, when we have slept, when we have jolly things about us—it is nothing. We have been made an exception of—and got our rations. The big thing confronts us still. It is vast, I agree, but vast as it is it is the thing we have to think about. I do not know why it should be so, but I am compelled by something in my nature to want to serve this idea of a new age for mankind. I want it as my culminating want. I want a world in order, a disciplined mankind going on to greater things. Don't you?"

"Now you tell me of it," she said with a smile, "I do."

"But before——?"

"No. You've made it clear. It wasn't clear before."

"I've been talking of this sort of thing with my friend Dr. Martineau. And I've been thinking as well as talking. That perhaps is why I'm so clear and positive."

"I don't complain that you are clear and positive. I've been coming along the same way. . . . It's refreshing to meet you."

"I found it refreshing to meet Martineau." A twinge of conscience about Dr. Martineau turned Sir Richmond into a new channel. "He's a most inter-

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esting man," he said. "Rather shy in some respects. Devoted to his work. And he's writing a book which has saturated him in these ideas. Only two nights ago we stood here and talked about it. 'The Psychology of a New Age.' The world, he believes, is entering upon a new phase in its history, the adolescence, so to speak, of mankind. It is an idea that seizes the imagination. There is a flow of new ideas abroad, he thinks, widening realisations, unprecedented hopes and fears. There is a consciousness of new powers and new responsibilities. We are sharing the adolescence of our race. It is giving history a new and more intimate meaning for us. It is bringing us into directer relation with public affairs,—making them matter as formerly they didn't seem to matter. That idea of the bright little private life has to go by the board."

"I suppose it has," she said meditatively, as though she had been thinking over some such question before.

"The private life," she said, "has a way of coming aboard again."

Her reflections travelled fast and broke out now far ahead of him.

"You have some sort of work cut out for you?" she said abruptly.

"Yes. Yes, I have."

"I haven't," she said.

"So that I go about," she added, "like some one who is looking for something. I'd like to know—if it's not jabbing too searching a question at you—what you have found."

Sir Richmond considered. "Incidentally," he smiled, "I want to get a lasso over the neck of that

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very forcible and barbaric person, your father. I am doing my best to help lay the foundation of a scientific world control of fuel production and distribution. We have a Fuel Commission in London with rather wide powers of inquiry into the whole world problem of fuel. We shall come out to Washington presently with proposals."

Miss Grammont surveyed the landscape. "I suppose," she said, "poor father *is* rather like an unbroken mule in business affairs. So many of our big business men in America are. He'll lash out at you."

"I don't mind if only he lashes out openly in the sight of all men."

She considered and turned on Sir Richmond gravely.

"Tell me what you want to do to him. You find out so many things for me that I seem to have been thinking about in a sort of almost invisible half-conscious way. I've been suspecting for a long time that civilisation wasn't much good unless it got people like my father under some sort of control. But controlling father—as distinguished from managing him!" She reviewed some private and amusing memories. "He is a most intractable man."

§ 3

They had gone on to talk of her father and of the types of men who controlled international business. She had had plentiful opportunities for observation in their homes and her own. Gunter Lake, the big

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banker, she knew particularly well because, it seemed, she had been engaged or was engaged to marry him. "All these people," she said, "are pushing things about, affecting millions of lives, hurting and disordering hundreds of thousands of people. They don't seem to know what they are doing. They have no plans in particular. . . . And you are getting something going that will be a plan and a direction and a conscience and a control for them. You will find my father extremely difficult, but some of our younger men would love it.

"And," she went on; "there are American women who'd love it too. We're petted. We're kept out of things. We aren't placed. We don't get enough to do. We're spenders and wasters—not always from choice. While these fathers and brothers and husbands of ours play about with the fuel and power and life and hope of the world as though it was a game of poker. With all the empty unspeakable solemnity of the male. And treat us as though we ought to be satisfied if they bring home part of the winnings.

"That can't go on," she said.

Her eyes went back to the long low undulating sky-line of the downs. She spoke as though she took up the thread of some controversy that had played a large part in her life. "That isn't going on," she said with an effect of conclusive decision.

Sir Richmond recalled that little speech now as he returned from Salisbury station to the *Old George* after his farewell to Martineau. He recalled too the soft firmness of her profile and the delicate line of her lifted chin. He felt that this time at any rate he was

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not being deceived by the outward shows of a charming human being. This young woman had real firmness of character to back up her free and independent judgments. He smiled at the idea of any facile passion in the composition of so sure and gallant a personality. Martineau was very fine-minded in many respects, but he was an old maid; and like all old maids he saw man and woman in every encounter. But passion was a thing men and women fell back upon when they had nothing else in common. When they thought in the pleasantest harmony and every remark seemed to weave a fresh thread of common interest, then it wasn't so necessary. It might happen, but it wasn't so necessary. . . . If it did it would be a secondary thing to companionship. . . . That's what she was,—a companion.

But a very lovely and wonderful companion, the companion one would not relinquish until the very last moment one could keep with her.

Her views about America and about her own place in the world seemed equally fresh and original to Sir Richmond.

"I realise I've got to be a responsible American citizen," she had said. That didn't mean that she attached very much importance to her recently acquired vote. She evidently classified voters into the irresponsible who just had votes and the responsible who also had a considerable amount of property as well. She had no illusions about the power of the former class. It didn't exist. They were steered to their decisions by people employed, directed, or stimulated by "father" and his friends and associates, the own-

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ers of America, the real "responsible citizens." Or they fell a prey to the merely adventurous leading of "revolutionaries." But anyhow they were steered. She herself, it was clear, was bound to become a very responsible citizen indeed. She would some day, she laughed, be "swimming in oil and suchlike property." Her interest in Sir Richmond's schemes for a scientific world management of fuel was therefore, she realised, a very direct one. But it was remarkable to find a young woman seeing it like that.

Father it seemed varied very much in his attitude towards her. He despised and distrusted women generally, and it was evident he had made it quite clear to her how grave an error it was on her part to persist in being a daughter and not a son. At moments it seemed to Sir Richmond that she was disposed to agree with father upon that. When Mr. Grammont's sense of her regrettable femininity was uppermost, then he gave his intelligence chiefly to schemes for tying her up against the machinations of adventurers by means of trustees, partners, lawyers, advisers, agreements and suchlike complications, or for acquiring a workable son by marriage. To this last idea it would seem the importance in her life of the rather heavily named Gunter Lake was to be ascribed. But another mood of the old man's was distrust of anything that could not be spoken of as his "own flesh and blood," and then he would direct his attention to a kind of masculinisation of his daughter and to schemes for giving her the completest control of all he had to leave her provided she never married nor fell under masculine sway. "After all," he would reflect

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as he hesitated over the practicability of his life's ideal, "there was Hetty Green."

This latter idea had reft her suddenly at the age of seventeen from the educational care of an English gentlewoman warranted to fit her for marriage with any prince in Europe, and thrust her for the mornings and a moiety of the afternoons of the better part of a year, after a swift but competent training, into a shirtwaist and an office down-town. She had been intrusted at first to a harvester concern independent of Mr. Grammont, because he feared his own people wouldn't train her hard. She had worked for ordinary wages and ordinary hours, and at the end of the day, she mentioned casually, a large automobile with two men servants and a trustworthy secretary used to pick her out from the torrent of undistinguished workers that poured out of the Synoptical Building. This masculinisation idea had also sent her on a commission of inquiry into Mexico. There apparently she had really done responsible work.

But upon the question of labour Mr. Grammont was fierce, even for an American business man, and one night at a dinner-party he discovered his daughter displaying what he considered an improper familiarity with socialist ideas. This had produced a violent revulsion towards the purdah system and the idea of a matrimonial alliance with Gunter Lake. Gunter Lake, Sir Richmond gathered, wasn't half a bad fellow. Generally it would seem Miss Grammont liked him, and she had a way of speaking about him that suggested that in some way Mr. Lake had been rather hardly used and had acquired merit by his behaviour

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under bad treatment. There was some story, however, connected with her war services in Europe upon which Miss Grammont was evidently indisposed to dwell. About that story Sir Richmond was left at the end of his Avebury day and after his last talk with Dr. Martineau, still quite vaguely guessing.

So much fact about Miss Grammont as we have given had floated up in fragments and pieced itself together in Sir Richmond's mind in the course of a day and a half. The fragments came up as allusions or by way of illustration. The sustaining topic was this New Age Sir Richmond foreshadowed, this world under scientific control, the Utopia of fully developed people fully developing the resources of the earth. For a number of trivial reasons Sir Richmond found himself ascribing the project of this New Age almost wholly to Dr. Martineau, and presenting it as a much completer scheme than he was justified in doing. It was true that Dr. Martineau had not said many of the things Sir Richmond ascribed to him, but also it was true that they had not crystallised out in Sir Richmond's mind before his talks with Dr. Martineau. The idea of a New Age necessarily carries with it the idea of fresh rules of conduct and of different relationships between human beings. And it throws those who talk about it into the companionship of a common enterprise. To-morrow the New Age will be here no doubt, but to-day it is the hope and adventure of only a few human beings.

So that it was natural for Miss Grammont and Sir Richmond to ask: "What are *we* to do with such types as father?" and to fall into an idiom that assumed a

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joint enterprise. They had agreed by a tacit consent to a common conception of the world they desired as a world scientifically ordered, an immense organisation of mature common sense, healthy and secure, gathering knowledge and power for creative adventures as yet beyond dreaming. They were prepared to think of the makers of the Avebury dike as their yesterday selves, of the stone-age savages as a phase in their late childhood, and of this great world order Sir Richmond foresaw as a day whose dawn was already at hand. And in such long perspectives, the states, governments and institutions of to-day became very temporary-looking and replaceable structures indeed. Both these two people found themselves thinking in this fashion with an unwonted courage and freedom because the other one had been disposed to think in this fashion before. Sir Richmond was still turning over in his mind the happy mutual release of the imagination this chance companionship had brought about when he found himself back again at the threshold of the *Old George*.

§ 4

Sir Richmond Hardy was not the only man who was thinking intently about Miss Grammont at that particular moment. Two gentlemen were coming towards her across the Atlantic whose minds, it chanced, were very busily occupied by her affairs. One of these was her father, who was lying in his brass bed in his commodious cabin on the *Hollandia*, regretting his diminishing ability to sleep in the early morn-

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ing now, even when he was in the strong and soothing air of mid-Atlantic, and thinking of V. V. because she had a way of coming into his mind when it was undefended; and the other was Mr. Gunter Lake on the *Megantic*, one day out from Sandy Hook, who found himself equally sleepless and preoccupied. And although Mr. Lake was a man of vast activities and complicated engagements he was coming now to Europe for the express purpose of seeing V. V. and having things out with her fully and completely because, in spite of all that had happened, she made such an endless series of delays in coming to America.

Old Grammont as he appeared upon the pillow of his bed by the light of a rose-shaded bedside lamp, was a small-headed, grey-haired gentleman with a wrinkled face and sunken brown eyes. Years of business experience, mitigated only by such exercise as the game of poker affords, had intensified an instinctive inexpressiveness. Under the most solitary circumstances old Grammont was still inexpressive, and the face that stared at the ceiling of his cabin and the problem of his daughter might have been the face of a pickled head in a museum for any indication it betrayed of the flow of thought within. He lay on his back and his bent knees lifted the bedclothes into a sharp mountain. He was not even trying to sleep.

Why, he meditated, had V. V. stayed on in Europe so much longer than she need have done? And why had Gunter Lake suddenly got into a state of mind about her? Why didn't the girl confide in her father at least about these things? What was afoot? She had thrown over Lake once and it seemed she was

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going to turn him down again. Well, if she was an ordinary female person that was a silly sort of thing to do. With her fortune and his—you could buy the world. But suppose she was not an ordinary female person. . . . Her mother hadn't been ordinary anyhow, whatever else you called her, and no one could call Grammont blood an ordinary fluid. . . . Old Grammont had never had any delusions about Lake. If Lake's father hadn't been a big man Lake would never have counted for anything at all. Suppose she did turn him down. In itself that wasn't a thing to break her father's heart.

What did matter was not whether she threw Lake over but what she threw him over for. If it was because he wasn't man enough, well and good. But if it was for some other lover, some good-looking, worthless imposter, some European title or suchlike folly——!

At the thought of a lover for V. V. a sudden flood of anger poured across the old man's mind, behind the still mask of his face. It infuriated him even to think of V. V., his little V. V., his own girl, entertaining a lover, being possibly—most shameful thought—*in love!* Like some ordinary silly female, sinking to kisses, to the deeds one could buy and pay for. His V. V. ! The idea infuriated and disgusted him. He fought against it as a possibility. Once some woman in New York had ventured to hint something to him of some fellow, some affair with an artist, Caston, she had linked this Caston with V. V.'s Red-Cross nursing in Europe. . . . Old Grammont had made that woman sorry she spoke. Afterwards he had caused in-

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quiries to be made about this Caston, careful inquiries. It seems that he and V. V. had known each other, there had been something— But nothing that V. V. need be ashamed of. When old Grammont's inquiry man had come back with his report, old Grammont had been very particular about that. At first the fellow had not been very clear, rather muddled indeed as to how things were—no doubt he had wanted to make out there was something just to seem to earn his money. Old Grammont had struck the table sharply and the eyes that looked out of his mask had blazed. "What have you found out against her?" he had asked in a low even voice. "Absolutely nothing, sir," said the agent, suddenly white to the lips. . . .

Old Grammont stared at his memory of that moment for a while. That affair was all right, quite all right. Of course it was all right. And also, happily, Caston was among the dead. But it was well her broken engagement with Lake had been resumed as though it had never been broken off. If there had been any talk that fact answered it. And now that Lake had served his purpose old Grammont did not care in the least if he was shelved. V. V. could stand alone.

Old Grammont had a phrase in his mind that looked like dominating the situation. He dreamt of saying to V. V.: "V. V., I'm going to make a man of you—if you're man enough." That was a large proposition; it implied—oh! it implied all sorts of things. It meant that she would care as little for philandering as an able young business man. Perhaps some day, a long time ahead, she might marry. There wasn't

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much reason for it, but it might be she would not wish to be called a spinster. "Take a husband," thought old Grammont, "when I am gone, as one takes a butler, to make the household complete." In previous meditations on his daughter's outlook old Grammont had found much that was very suggestive in the precedent of Queen Victoria. She had had no husband of the lord-and-master type, so to speak, but only a Prince Consort, well in hand. Why shouldn't the Grammont heiress dominate her male belonging, if it came to that, in the same fashion? Why shouldn't one tie her up and tie the whole thing up, so far as any male belonging was concerned, leaving V. V. in all other respects free? How could one do it?

The speculative calm of the sunken brown eyes deepened.

His thoughts went back to the white face of the private inquiry agent. "Absolutely nothing, sir." What had the fellow thought of hinting? Nothing of that kind in V. V.'s composition,—never fear. Yet it was a curious anomaly that while one had a thousand ways of defending one's daughter and one's property against that daughter's husband, there was no power on earth by which a father could stretch his dead hand between that daughter and the undue influence of a lover. Unless you tied her up for good and all, lover or none. . . .

One was left at the mercy of V. V.'s character. . . .

"I ought to see more of her," he thought. "She gets away from me. Just as her mother did." A man need not suspect his womenkind but he should know what they are doing. It is duty, his protective duty to

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them. These companions, these Seyffert women and so forth, were all very well in their way; there wasn't much they kept from you if you got them cornered and asked them intently. But a father's eye is better. He must go about with the girl for a time, watch her with other men, give her chances to talk business with him and see if she took them. "V. V., I'm going to make a man of you," the phrase ran through his brain. The deep instinctive jealousy of the primordial father was still strong in old Grammont's blood. It would be pleasant to go about with her on his right hand in Paris, *his* girl, straight and lovely, desirable and unapproachable,—above that sort of nonsense, above all other masculine subjugation.

"V. V., I'm going to make a man of you. . . ."

His mind grew calmer. Whatever she wanted in Paris should be hers. He'd just let her rip. They'd be like sweethearts together, he and his girl.

Old Grammont dozed off into dreamland.

§ 5

The imaginations of Mr. Gunter Lake, two days behind Mr. Grammont upon the Atlantic, were of a gentler, more romantic character. In them V. V. was no longer a daughter in the fierce focus of a father's jealousy, but the goddess enshrined in a good man's heart. Indeed the figure that the limelight of the reverie fell upon was not V. V. at all but Mr. Gunter Lake himself, in his favourite rôle of the perfect lover.

An interminable speech unfolded itself. "I ask for nothing in return. I've never worried you about that

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Caston business and I never will. Married to me you shall be as free as if you were unmarried. Don't I know, my dear girl, that you don't love me yet? Let that be as you wish. I want nothing you are not willing to give me, nothing at all. All I ask is the privilege of making life happy—and it shall be happy—for you. . . . All I ask. . . . All I ask. . . . Protect, guard, cherish. . . .”

For to Mr. Gunter Lake it seemed there could be no lovelier thing in life than a wife “in name only” slowly warmed into a glow of passion by the steadfast devotion and the strength and wisdom of a mate at first despised. Until at last a day would come. . . .

“My darling!” Mr. Gunter Lake whispered to the darkness. “My little guirl. *It has been worth the waiting.* . . .”

§ 6

Miss Grammont met Sir Richmond in the bureau of the *Old George* with a telegram in her hand. “My father reported his latitude and longitude by wireless last night. The London people think he will be off Falmouth in four days' time. He wants me to join his liner there and go on to Cherbourg and Paris. He's arranged that. He's the sort of man who can arrange things like that. There'll be some one at Falmouth to look after us and put us aboard the liner. I must wire them where I can pick up a telegram to-morrow.”

“Wells in Somerset,” said Sir Richmond.

His plans were already quite clear. He explained that he wanted her first to see Shaftesbury, a little old

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Wessex town that was three or four hundred years older than Salisbury, perched on a hill, a Saxon town, where Alfred had gathered his forces against the Danes and where Canute, who had ruled over all Scandinavia and Iceland and Greenland, and had come near ruling a patch of America, had died. It was a little sleepy place now, looking out dreamily over beautiful views. They would lunch in Shaftesbury and walk round it. Then they would go in the afternoon through the pleasant west country where the Celts had prevailed against the old folk of the Stonehenge temple and the Romans against the Celts and the Saxons against the Romanised Britons and the Danes against the Saxons, a war-scarred landscape, abounding in dikes and intrenchments and castles, sunken now into the deepest peace, to Glastonbury to see what there was to see of a marsh village the Celts had made for themselves three or four hundred years before the Romans came. And at Glastonbury also there were the ruins of a great Benedictine church and abbey that had once rivalled Salisbury. Thence they would go on to Wells to see yet another great cathedral and to dine and sleep. Glastonbury Abbey and Wells Cathedral brought the story of Europe right up to Reformation times.

"That will be a good day for us," said Sir Richmond. "It will be like turning over the pages of the history of our family, to and fro. There will be nothing nearly so old as Avebury in it, but there will be something from almost every chapter that comes after Stonehenge. Rome will be poorly represented, but that may come the day after at Bath. And the

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next day too I want to show you something of our old River Severn. We shall come right up to the present if we go through Bristol. There we shall have a whiff of America, our new find, from which the tobacco comes, and we shall be reminded of how we set sail thither—was it yesterday or the day before? You will understand at Bristol how it is that the energy has gone out of this dreaming land—to Africa and America and the whole wide world. It was the good men of Bristol, by-the-by, with their trade from Africa to America, who gave you your colour problem. Bristol we may go through to-morrow and Gloucester, mother of I don't know how many American Gloucesters. Bath we'll get in somehow. And then as an Anglo-American showman I shall be tempted to run you northward a little way past Tewkesbury, just to go into a church here and there and show you monuments bearing little shields with the stars and stripes upon them, a few stars and a few stripes, the Washington family monuments."

"It was not only from England that America came," said Miss Grammont.

"But England takes an American memory back most easily and most fully—to Avebury and the Baltic Northmen, past the emperors and the Corinthian columns that smothered Latin Europe. . . . For you and me anyhow this is our past, this was our childhood, and this is our land."

He interrupted laughing as she was about to reply. "Well, anyhow," he said, "it is a beautiful day and a pretty country before us with the ripest history in every grain of its soil. So we'll send a wire to your

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London people and tell them to send their instructions to Wells."

"I'll tell Belinda," she said, "to be quick with her packing."

§ 7

As Miss Grammont and Sir Richmond Hardy fulfilled the details of his excellent programme and revised their impressions of the past and their ideas about the future in the springtime sunlight of Wiltshire and Somerset, with Miss Seyffert acting the part of an almost ostentatiously discreet chorus, it was inevitable that their conversation should become, by imperceptible gradations, more personal and intimate. They kept up the pose, which was supposed to represent Dr. Martineau's philosophy, of being Man and Woman on their Planet considering its Future, but insensibly they developed the idiosyncrasies of their position. They might profess to be Man and Woman in the most general terms, but the facts that she was the daughter not of Everyman but old Grammont and that Sir Richmond was the angry leader of a minority upon the Fuel Commission became more and more important. "What shall we do with this planet of ours?" gave way by the easiest transitions to "What are you and I doing and what have we got to do? How do you feel about it all? What do you desire and what do you dare?"

It was natural that Sir Richmond should talk of his Fuel Commission to a young woman whose interests in fuel were even greater than his own. He found that she was very much better read than he was in

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the recent literature of socialism, and that she had what he considered to be a most unfeminine grasp of economic ideas. He thought her attitude towards socialism a very sane one because it was also his own. So far as socialism involved the idea of a scientific control of natural resources as a common property administered in the common interest, she and he were very greatly attracted by it, but so far as it served as a form of expression for the merely insubordinate discontent of the many with the few, under any conditions so long as it was a formula for class jealousy and warfare, they were both repelled by it. If she had had any illusions about the working class possessing as a class any profounder political wisdom or more generous public impulses than any other class, those illusions had long since departed. People were much the same, she thought, in every class; there was no stratification of either rightness or righteousness.

He found he could talk to her of his work and aims upon the Fuel Commission and of the conflict and failure of motives he found in himself, as freely as he had done to Dr. Martineau and with a surer confidence of understanding. Perhaps his talks with the doctor had got his ideas into order and made them more readily expressible than they would have been otherwise. He argued against the belief that any class could be good as a class or bad as a class, and he instanced the conflict of motives he found in all the members of his Committee and most so in himself. He repeated the persuasion he had already confessed to Dr. Martineau that there was not a single member of the Fuel Commission but had a considerable drive

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towards doing the right thing about fuel, and not one who had a single-minded, unencumbered drive towards the right thing. "That," said Sir Richmond, "is what makes life so interesting and, in spite of a thousand tragic disappointments, so hopeful. Every man is a bad man, every man is a feeble man and every man is a good man. My motives come and go. Yours do the same. We vary in response to the circumstances about us. Given a proper atmosphere, most men will be public-spirited, right-living, generous. Given perplexities and darkness, most of us can be cowardly and vile. People say you cannot change human nature and perhaps that is true, but you can change its responses endlessly. The other day I was in Bohemia, discussing Silesian coal with Benes, and I went to see the Festival of the Bohemian Sokols. Opposite to where I sat, far away across the arena, was a great bank of men of the Sokol organisations, an unbroken brown mass wrapped in their brown uniform cloaks. Suddenly the sun came out and at a word the whole body flung back their cloaks, showed their Garibaldi shirts and became one solid blaze of red. It was an amazing transformation until one understood what had happened. Yet nothing material had changed—but the sunshine. And given a change in laws and prevailing ideas, and the very same people who are greedy traders, grasping owners, and revolting workers to-day will all throw their cloaks aside and you will find them working together cheerfully, even generously, for a common end. They aren't traders and owners and workers and so forth by any inner necessity. Those are just the ugly parts they

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play in the present drama. Which is nearly at the end of its run."

"That's a hopeful view," said Miss Grammont. "I don't see the flaw in it—if there is a flaw."

"There isn't one," said Sir Richmond. "It is my chief discovery about life. I began with the question of fuel and the energy it affords mankind, and I have found that my generalisation applies to all human affairs. Human beings are fools, weaklings, cowards, passionate idiots,—I grant you. That is the brown-cloak side of them, so to speak. But they are not such fools and so forth that they can't do pretty well materially if once we hammer out a sane collective method of getting and using fuel. Which people generally will understand—in the place of our present methods of snatch and wrangle. Of that I am absolutely convinced. Some work, some help, some willingness you can get out of everybody. That's the red. And the same principle applies to most labour and property problems, to health, to education, to population, social relationships and war and peace. We haven't got the right system, we have inefficient half-baked systems, or no system at all, and a wild confusion and war of ideas in all these respects. But there is a right system possible none the less. Let us only hammer our way through to the sane and reasonable organisation in this and that and the other human affairs, and once we have got it, we shall have got it for good. We may not live to see even the beginnings of success, but the spirit of order, the spirit that has already produced organised science, if only there are a few faithful, persistent people to stick to the job, will in the

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long run certainly save mankind and make human life—clean and splendid, happy work in a clear mind. If I could live to see it!”

“And as for us—in our time?”

“Measured by the end we serve, we don’t matter. You know we don’t matter.”

“We have to find our fun in the building and in our confidence that we do really build.”

“So long as our confidence lasts there is no great hardship,” said Sir Richmond.

“So long as our confidence lasts,” she repeated after him.

“Ah!” cried Sir Richmond. “There it is! So long as our confidence lasts! So long as one keeps one’s mind steady. That is what I came away with Dr. Martineau to discuss. I went to him for advice. I haven’t known him for more than a month. It’s amusing to find myself preaching forth to you. It was just faith I had lost. Suddenly I had lost my power of work. My confidence in the rightness of what I was doing evaporated. My will failed me. I don’t know if you will understand what that means. It wasn’t that my reason didn’t assure me just as certainly as ever that what I was trying to do was the right thing to try to do. But somehow that seemed a cold and personally unimportant proposition. The life had gone out of it. . . .”

He paused as if arrested by a momentary doubt. “I don’t know why I tell you these things,” he said.

“You tell them me,” she said.

“It’s a little like a patient in a hydropath retailing his ailments.”

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"No. No. Go on."

"I begin to think now that what took the go out of me as my work went on was the lack of any real fellowship in what I was doing. It was the pressure of the opposition in the Committee, day after day. It was being up against men who didn't reason against me but who just showed by everything they did that the things I wanted to achieve didn't matter to them one rap. It was going back to a home, lunching in clubs, reading papers, going about a world in which all the organisation, all the possibility of the organisation I dream of is tacitly denied. I don't know if it seems an extraordinary confession of weakness to you, but that steady refusal of the majority of my Committee to come into co-operation with me has beaten me—or at any rate has come very near to beating me. Most of them you know are such *able* men. You can *feel* their knowledge and common sense. They, and everybody about me, seemed busy and intent upon more immediate things that seemed more real to them than this remote theoretical *priggish* end I have set for myself. . . ."

He paused.

"Go on," said Miss Grammont, "I think I understand this."

"And yet I know I am right."

"I know you are right. I'm certain. Go on."

"If one of those ten thousand members of the Sokol Society had thrown back his brown cloak and shown red when all the others still kept themselves cloaked—if he was a normal sensitive man—he might have felt something of a fool. He might have felt prema-

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ture and presumptuous. Red he was and the others he knew were red also, but why show it? That is the peculiar distress of people like ourselves, who have some sense of history and some sense of a larger life within us than our merely personal life. We don't want to go on with the old story merely. We want to live somehow in that larger life and to live for its greater ends and lose something unbearable of ourselves, and in wanting to do that we are only wanting to do what nearly everybody perhaps is ripe to do and will presently want to do. When the New Age Martineau talks about begins to come it may come very quickly—as the red came at Prague. But for the present every one hesitates about throwing back the cloak.”

“Until the cloak becomes unbearable,” she said, repeating his word.

“I came upon this holiday in the queerest state. I thought I was ill. I thought I was overworked. But the real trouble was a loneliness that robbed me of all driving force. Nobody seemed thinking and feeling with me. . . . I have never realised until now what a gregarious beast man is. It needed only a day or so with Martineau, in the atmosphere of ideas and beliefs like my own, to begin my restoration. Now as I talk to you— That is why I have clutched at your company. Because here you are, coming from thousands of miles away, and you talk my ideas, you fall into my ways of thought as though we had gone to the same school.”

“Perhaps we *have* gone to the same school,” she said.

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“You mean?”

“Disappointment. Disillusionment. Having to find something better in life than the first things it promised us.”

“But you—? Disappointed? I thought that in America people might be educating already on different lines——”

“Even in America,” Miss Grammont said, “crops only grow on the ploughed land.”

§ 8

Glastonbury in the afternoon was wonderful; they talked of Avalon and of that vanished legendary world of King Arthur and his knights, and in the early evening they came to Wells and a pleasant inn, with a quaint little garden before its front door that gave directly upon the cathedral. The three tourists devoted a golden half-hour before dinner to the sculptures on the western face. The great screen of wrought stone rose up warmly, grey and clear and distinct against a clear blue sky in which the moon hung, round and already bright. That western façade with its hundreds of little figures tells the whole story of God and Man from Adam to the Last Judgment, as the mediæval mind conceived it. It is an even fuller exposition than the carved Bible history that goes round the chapter-house at Salisbury. It presented the universe, said Sir Richmond, as a complete crystal globe. It explained everything in life in a simple and natural manner, hope, heaven, devil, and despair.

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Generations had lived and died mentally within that crystal globe, convinced that it was all and complete.

"And now," said Miss Grammont, "we are in limitless space and time. The crystal globe is broken."

"And," said Belinda amazingly—for she had been silent for some time, "the goldfish are on the floor, V. V. Free to flop about. Are they any happier?"

It was one of those sudden rhetorical triumphs that are best left alone. "I trow not," said Belinda, giving the last touch to it.

After dinner Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont walked round the cathedral and along by the moat of the bishop's palace, and Miss Seyffert stayed in the hotel to send off post-cards to her friends, a duty she had neglected for some days. The evening was warm and still and the moon was approaching its full and very bright. Insensibly the soft afterglow passed into moonlight.

At first the two companions talked very little. Sir Richmond was well content with this tacit friendliness and Miss Grammont was preoccupied because she was very strongly moved to tell him things about herself that hitherto she had told to no one. It was not merely that she wanted to tell him these things but also that for reasons she did not put as yet very clearly to herself she thought they were things he ought to know. She talked of herself at first in general terms. "Life comes on any one with a rush, childhood seems lasting for ever and then suddenly one tears into life," she said. It was even more so for women than it was for men. You are shown life, a

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crowded vast spectacle full of what seems to be intensely interesting activities and endless delightful and frightful and tragic possibilities, and you have hardly had time to look at it before you are called upon to make decisions. And there is something in your blood that urges you to decisive acts. Your mind, your reason resists. "Give me time," it says. "They clamour at you with treats, crowds, shows, theatres, all sorts of things; lovers buzz at you, each trying to fix you part of his life when you are trying to get clear to live a little of your own." Her father had had one merit at any rate. He had been jealous of her lovers and very ready to interfere.

"I wanted a lover to love," she said. "Every girl of course wants that. I wanted to be tremendously excited. . . . And at the same time I dreaded the enormous interference. . . .

"I wasn't temperamentally a cold girl. Men interested and excited me, but there were a lot of men about and they clashed with each other. Perhaps way down in some out-of-the-way place I should have fallen in love quite easily with the one man who came along. But no man fixed his image. After a year or so I think I began to lose the power which is natural to a young girl of falling very easily into love. I became critical of the youths and men who were attracted to me and I became analytical about myself. . . .

"I suppose it is because you and I are going to part so soon that I can speak so freely to you. . . . But there are things about myself that I have never had out even with myself. I can talk to myself in you——"

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She paused baffled. "I know exactly," said Sir Richmond.

"In my composition I perceive there have always been two ruling strains. I was a spoiled child at home, a rather reserved girl at school, keen on my dignity. I liked respect. I didn't give myself away. I suppose one would call that personal pride. Anyhow it was that streak made me value the position of being a rich married woman in New York. That was why I became engaged to Lake. He seemed to be as good a man as there was about. He said he adored me and wanted me to crown his life. He wasn't ill-looking or ill-mannered. The second main streak in my nature wouldn't however fit in with that."

She stopped short.

"The second streak," said Sir Richmond.

"Oh!— Love of beauty, love of romance. I want to give things their proper names; I don't want to pretend to you. . . . It was more or less than that. . . . It was—imaginative sensuousness. Why should I pretend it wasn't in me? I believe that streak is in all women."

"I believe so too. In all properly constituted women."

"I tried to devote that streak to Lake," she said. "I did my best for him. But Lake was much too much of a gentleman or an idealist about women, or what you will, to know his business as a lover. And that side of me fell in love, the rest of me protesting, with a man named Caston. It was a notorious affair. Everybody in New York couples my name with Caston. Except when my father is about. His jealousy

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has blasted an area of silence—in that matter—all round him. He will not know of that story. And they dare not tell him. I should pity any one who tried to tell it him.”

“What sort of man was this Caston?”

Miss Grammont seemed to consider. She did not look at Sir Richmond; she kept her profile to him.

“He was,” she said deliberately, “a very rotten sort of man.”

She spoke like one resolved to be exact and judicial. “I believe I always knew he wasn’t right. But he was very handsome. And ten years younger than Lake. And nobody else seemed to be all right, so I swallowed that. He was an artist, a painter. Perhaps you know his work.” Sir Richmond shook his head. “He could make American business men look like characters out of the Three Musketeers, they said, and he was beginning to be popular. He made love to me. In exactly the way Lake didn’t. If I shut my eyes to one or two things, it was delightful. I liked it. But my father would have stood a painter as my husband almost as cheerfully as he would a man of colour. I made a fool of myself, as people say, about Caston. Well— When the war came, he talked in a way that irritated me. He talked like an East Side Annunzio, about art and war. It made me furious to know it was all talk and that he didn’t mean business. . . . I made him go.”

She paused for a moment. “He hated to go.

“Then I relented. Or I missed him and I wanted to be made love to. Or I really wanted to go on my own account. I forget. I forget my motives altogether

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now. That early war-time was a queer time for every one. A kind of wildness got into the blood. . . . I threw over Lake. All the time things had been going on in New York—I had still been engaged to Lake. I went to France. I did good work. I did do good work. And also things were possible there that would have seemed fantastic in America. You know something of the war-time atmosphere. There was death everywhere and people snatched at gratifications. Caston made 'To-morrow we die' his text. We contrived three days in Paris together—not very cleverly. All sorts of people know about it. . . . We went very far."

She stopped short.

"Well?" said Sir Richmond.

"He did die. . . ."

Another long pause. "They told me Caston had been killed. But some one hinted—or I guessed—that there was more in it than an ordinary casualty.

"Nobody, I think, realises that I know. This is the first time I have ever confessed that I do know. He was shot. He was shot for cowardice."

"That might happen to any man," said Sir Richmond presently. "No man is a hero all round the twenty-four hours. Perhaps he was caught by circumstances, unprepared. He may have been taken by surprise."

"It was the most calculated, cold-blooded cowardice imaginable. He let three other men go on and get killed. . . ."

"No. It is no good your inventing excuses for a

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man you know nothing about. It was vile, contemptible cowardice—and meanness. It fitted in with a score of ugly little things I remembered. It explained them all. I know the evidence and the judgment against him were strictly just and true, because they were exactly in character. . . . And that, you see, was my man. That was the lover I had chosen. That was the man to whom I had given myself with both hands.”

Her soft unhurrying voice halted for a time, and then resumed in the same even tones of careful statement. “I wasn’t disgusted, not even with myself. About him I was chiefly sorry, intensely sorry, because I had made him come out of a life that suited and protected him, to the war. About myself, I was stunned and perplexed. I had the clearest realisation that what you and I have been calling the bright little personal life had broken off short and was spoiled and over and done with. I felt as though it was my body they had shot. And there I was, with fifty years of life left in me and nothing particular to do with them.”

“That was just the prelude to life,” said Sir Richmond.

“It didn’t seem so at the time. I felt I had to get hold of something or go to pieces. I couldn’t turn to religion. I had no religion. And Duty? What is Duty? I set myself to that. I had a kind of revelation one night. ‘Either I find out what all this world is about,’ I said, ‘or I perish.’ I have lost myself and I must forget myself—by getting hold of something bigger than myself. And becoming that. That’s why

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I have been making a sort of historical pilgrimage. . . . That's my story, Sir Richmond. That's my education. . . . Somehow though your troubles are different, it seems to me that my little muddle makes me understand how it is with you. What you've got, this idea of a scientific ordering of the world, is what I, in my younger, less experienced way, have been feeling my way towards. I want to join on. I want to get hold of this idea of a great fuel control in the world and of a still greater economic and educational control of which it is a part. I want to make that idea a part of myself. Rather I want to make myself a part of it. When you talk of it I believe in it altogether."

"And I believe in it, when I talk of it to you."

§ 9

Sir Richmond was stirred very deeply by Miss Grammont's confidences. His dispute with Dr. Martineau was present in his mind, so that he did not want to make love to her. But he was extremely anxious to express his vivid sense of the value of her friendship. And while he hesitated over this difficult and unfamiliar task she began to talk again of herself, and in such a way as to give a new turn to Sir Richmond's thoughts.

"Perhaps I ought to tell you a little more about myself," she said; "now that I have told you so much. I did a thing that still puzzles me. I was filled with a sense of hopeless disaster in France and I suppose I had some sort of desperate idea of saving

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something out of the situation. . . . I renewed my correspondence with Gunter Lake. He made the suggestion I knew he would make, and I renewed our engagement."

"To go back to wealth and dignity in New York?"

"Yes."

"But you don't love him?"

"That's always been plain to me. But what I didn't realise, until I had given my promise over again, was that I disliked him—acutely."

"You hadn't realised that before?"

"I hadn't thought about him sufficiently. But now I had to think about him a lot. The other affair had given me an idea perhaps of what it means to be married to a man. And here I am drifting back to him. The horrible thing about him is the steady—*enveloping* way in which he has always come at me. Without fellowship. Without any community of ideas. Ready to make the most extraordinary bargains. So long as he can in any way fix me and get me. What does it mean? What is there behind those watching, soliciting eyes of his? I don't in the least love him, and this desire and service and all the rest of it he offers me—it's not love. It's not even such love as Caston gave me. It's a game he plays with his imagination."

She had released a flood of new ideas in Sir Richmond's mind. "This is—illuminating," he said. "You dislike Lake acutely. You always have disliked him."

"I suppose I have. But it's only now I admit it to myself."

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"Yes. And— You might, for example, have married him in New York before the war."

"It came very near to that."

"And then probably you wouldn't have discovered you disliked him. You wouldn't have admitted it to yourself."

"I suppose I shouldn't. I suppose I should have tried to believe I loved him."

"Women do this sort of thing. Odd! I never realised it before. And there are endless wives suppressing an acute dislike. My wife does. I see now quite clearly that she detests me. Reasonably enough. From her angle I'm entirely detestable. But she won't admit it, won't know of it. She never will. To the end of my life, always, she will keep that detestation unconfessed. She puts a face on the matter. We both do. And this affair of yours. . . . Have you thought how unjust it is to Lake?"

"Not nearly so much as I might have done."

"It is unfair to him. Atrociously unfair. He's not my sort of man, perhaps, but it will hurt him cruelly according to the peculiar laws of his being. He seems to me a crawling sort of lover—with an immense self-conceit at the back of his crawlingness."

"He has," she indorsed.

"He backs himself to crawl—until he crawls triumphantly right over you. . . . I don't like to think of the dream he has. . . . I take it he will lose. Is it fair to go into this game with him?"

"In the interests of Lake," she said, smiling softly at Sir Richmond in the moonlight. "But you are perfectly right."

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“And suppose he doesn’t lose!”

Sir Richmond found himself uttering sentiments.

“There is only one decent way in which a civilised man and a civilised woman may approach one another. Passionate desire is not enough. What is called love is not enough. Pledges, rational considerations, all these things are worthless. All these things are compatible with hate. The primary essential is friendship, clear understanding, absolute confidence. Then within that condition, in that elect relationship, love is permissible, mating, marriage or no marriage, as you will—all things are permissible. . . .”

Came a long pause between them.

“Dear old cathedral,” said Miss Grammont, a little irrelevantly. She had an air of having concluded something that to Sir Richmond seemed scarcely to have begun. She stood looking at the great dark façade edged with moonlight for some moments, and then turned towards the hotel, which showed a pink-lit window.

“I wonder,” she said, “if Belinda is still up. And what she will think when I tell her of the final extinction of Mr. Lake. I think she rather looked forward to being the intimate friend, secrets and everything, of Mrs. Gunter Lake.”

§ 10

Sir Richmond woke up at dawn and he woke out of an extraordinary dream. He was saying to Miss Grammont: “There is no other marriage than the marriage of true minds. There is no other marriage

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than the marriage of true minds." He saw her as he had seen her the evening before, light and cool, coming towards him in the moonlight from the hotel. But also in the inconsistent way of dreams he was very close to her kind, faintly smiling face, and his eyes were wet with tears and he was kissing her hand. "My dear wife and mate," he was saying, and suddenly he was kissing her cool lips.

He woke up and stared at his dream, which faded out only very slowly before the fresh sunrise upon the red tiles and tree boughs outside the open window, and before the first stir and clamour of the birds.

He felt like a court in which some overwhelmingly revolutionary piece of evidence had been tendered. All the elaborate defence had broken down at one blow. He sat up on the edge of his bed, facing the new fact.

"This is monstrous and ridiculous," he said, "and Martineau judged me exactly. I am in love with her. . . . I am head over heels in love with her. I have never been so much in love or so truly in love with any one before."

§ 11

That was the dawn of a long day of tension for Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont. Because each was now vividly aware of being in love with the other and so neither was able to see how things were with the other. They were afraid of each other. A restraint had come upon them both, a restraint that was

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greatly enhanced by their sense of Belinda, acutely observant, ostentatiously tactful and self-effacing, and prepared at the slightest encouragement to be overwhelmingly romantic and sympathetic. Their talk waned, and was revived to an artificial activity and waned again. The historical interest had evaporated from the west of England and left only an urgent and embarrassing present.

But the loveliness of the weather did not fail, and the whole day was set in Severn landscapes. They first saw the great river like a sea with the Welsh mountains hanging in the sky behind as they came over the Mendip crest above Shipham. They saw it again as they crossed the hill before Clifton Bridge, and so they continued, climbing to hill crests for views at Alveston and near Dursley, and so to Gloucester and the lowest bridge and thence back downstream again through fat meadow-lands at first and much apple-blossom and then over gentle hills through wide, pale Newnham and Lidney and Alvington and Woolaston to old Chepstow and its brown castle, always with the widening estuary to the left of them and its foaming shoals and shining sandbanks. From Chepstow they turned back north along the steep Wye gorge to Tintern, and there at the snug little Beaufort Arms with its prim lawn and flower-garden they ended the day's journey.

Tintern Abbey they thought a poor graceless mass of ruin down beside the river, and it was fenced about jealously and locked up from their invasion. After dinner Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont went for a walk in the mingled twilight and moonlight up

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the hill towards Chepstow. Both of them were absurdly and nervously pressing to Belinda to come with them, but she was far too wise to take this sudden desire for her company seriously. Her dinner-shoes, she said, were too thin. Perhaps she would change and come out a little later. "Yes, come later," said Miss Grammont and led the way to the door.

They passed through the garden. "I think we go up the hill?" said Sir Richmond.

"Yes," she agreed, "up the hill."

Followed a silence.

Sir Richmond made an effort, but after some artificial and disconnected talk about Tintern Abbey, concerning which she had no history ready, and then, still lamer, about whether Monmouthshire is in England or Wales, silence fell again. The silence lengthened, assumed a significance, a dignity that no common words might break.

Then Sir Richmond spoke. "I love you," he said, "with all my heart."

Her soft voice came back after a stillness. "I love you," she said, "with all myself."

"I had long ceased to hope," said Sir Richmond, "that I should ever find a friend . . . a lover . . . perfect companionship. . . ."

They went on walking side by side, without touching each other or turning to each other.

"All the things I wanted to think I believed have come alive in me," she said. . . .

"Cool and sweet," said Sir Richmond. "Such happiness as I could not have imagined."

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The light of a silent bicycle appeared above them up the hill and swept down upon them, lit their two still faces brightly and passed.

"My dear," she whispered in the darkness between the high hedges.

They stopped short and stood quite still, trembling. He saw her face, dim and tender, looking up to his.

Then he took her in his arms and kissed her lips as he had desired in his dream. . . .

When they returned to the inn Belinda Seyffert offered flat explanations of why she had not followed them, and enlarged upon the moonlight effect of the Abbey ruins from the inn lawn. But the scared congratulations in her eyes betrayed her recognition that momentous things had happened between the two.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

FULL MOON

§ 1

SIR RICHMOND had talked in the moonlight and shadows of having found such happiness as he could not have imagined. But when he awoke in the night that happiness had evaporated. He awoke suddenly out of this love-dream that had lasted now for nearly four days and he awoke in a mood of astonishment and dismay.

He had thought that when he parted from Dr. Martineau he had parted also from that process of self-exploration that they had started together, but now he awakened to find it established and in full activity in his mind. Something or some one, a sort of etherealised Martineau-Hardy, an abstracted intellectual conscience, was demanding what he thought he was doing with Miss Grammont and whither he thought he was taking her, how he proposed to reconcile the close relationship with her that he was now embarked upon with, in the first place, his work upon and engagements with the Fuel Commission, and, in the second place, Martin Leeds. Curiously enough Lady Hardy didn't come into the case at all. He had done his utmost to keep Martin Leeds out of his head throughout the development of this affair. Now in an unruly and determined way that was extremely characteristic of her she seemed resolute to break in.

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She appeared as an advocate, without affection for her client but without any hostility, of the claims of Miss Grammont to be let alone. The elaborate pretence that Sir Richmond had maintained to himself that he had not made love to Miss Grammont, that their mutual attraction had been irresistible and had achieved its end in spite of their resolute and complete detachment, collapsed and vanished from his mind. He admitted to himself that driven by a kind of instinctive necessity he had led their conversation step by step to a realisation and declaration of love, and that it did not exonerate him in the least that Miss Grammont had been quite ready and willing to help him and meet him half-way. She wanted love as a woman does, more than a man does, and he had steadily presented himself as a man free to love, able to love and loving.

"She wanted a man to love, she wanted perfected fellowship, and you have made her that tremendous promise. That was implicit in your embrace. And how can you keep that promise?"

It was as if Martin spoke; it was her voice; it was the very quality of her thought.

"You belong to this work of yours, which must needs be interrupted or abandoned if you take her. Whatever is not mortgaged to your work is mortgaged to me. For the strange thing in all this is that you and I love one another—and have no power to do otherwise. In spite of all this.

"You have nothing to give her but stolen goods," said the shadow of Martin. "You have nothing to give any one personally any more. . . .

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"Think of the love that she desires and think of this love that you can give. . . .

"Is there any new thing in you that you can give her that you haven't given me? You and I know each other very well; perhaps I know *you* too well. Haven't you loved me as much as you can love any one? Think of all that there has been between us that you are ready now, eager now to set aside and forget as though it had never been. For four days you have kept me out of your mind in order to worship her. Yet you have known I was there—for all you would not know. No one else will ever be so intimate with you as I am. We have quarrelled together, wept together, jested happily and jested bitterly. You have spared me not at all. Pitiless and cruel you have been to me. You have reckoned up all my faults against me as though they were sins. You have treated me at times unlovingly—never was lover treated so unlovingly as you have sometimes treated me. And yet I have your love—as no other woman can ever have it. Even now when you are wildly in love with this girl's freshness and boldness and cleverness I come into your mind by right and necessity."

"She is different," argued Sir Richmond.

"But you are the same," said the shadow of Martin with Martin's unsparing return. "Your love has never been a steadfast thing. It comes and goes—like the wind. You are an extravagantly imperfect lover. But I have learned to accept you, as people accept the English weather. . . . Never in all your life have you loved, wholly, fully, steadfastly—as people deserve

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to be loved; not your mother nor your father, not your wife nor your children, nor me, nor our child, nor any living thing. Pleasant to all of us at times—at times bitterly disappointing. You do not even love this work of yours steadfastly, this work to which you sacrifice us all in turn. You do not love enough. That is why you have these moods and changes, that is why you have these lassitudes. So it is you are made. . . .

“And that is why you must not take this brave young life, so much simpler and braver than your own, and exalt it—as you can do—and then fail it, as you will do. . . .”

Sir Richmond’s mind and body lay very still for a time.

“Should I fail her? . . .”

For a time Martin Leeds passed from the foreground of his mind.

He was astonished to think how planless, instinctive, and unforeseeing his treatment of Miss Grammont had been. It had been just a blind drive to get hold of her and possess her. . . .

Suddenly his passion for her became active in its defence again.

“But is there such a thing as a perfect love? Is *yours* a perfect love, my dear Martin, with its insatiable jealousy, its ruthless criticism? Has the world ever seen a perfect lover yet? Isn’t it our imperfection that brings us together in a common need? Is Miss Grammont, after all, likely to get a more perfect love in all her life than this poor love of mine? And isn’t it good for her that she should love?”

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“Perfect love cherishes. Perfect love foregoes.”

Sir Richmond found his mind wandering far away from the immediate question. “Perfect love,” the phrase was his point of departure. Was it true that he could not love passionately and completely? Was that fundamentally what was the matter with him? Was that perhaps what was the matter with the whole world of mankind? It had not yet come to that power of loving which makes action full and simple and direct and unhesitating. Man upon his planet has not grown up to love, is still an eager, egotistical and fluctuating adolescent. He lacks the courage to love and the wisdom to love. Love is here. But it comes and goes, it is mixed with greeds and jealousies and cowardice and cowardly reservations. One hears it only in snatches and single notes. It is like something tuning up before the music begins. . . . The metaphor altogether ran away with Sir Richmond’s half-dreaming mind. Some day perhaps all life would go to music.

Love was music and power. If he had loved enough he need never have drifted away from his wife. Love would have created love, would have tolerated and taught and inspired. Where there is perfect love there is neither greed nor impatience. He would have done his work calmly. He would have won his way with his Committee instead of fighting and quarrelling with it perpetually. . . .

“Flimsy creatures,” he whispered. “Uncertain health. Uncertain strength. A will that comes and goes. Moods of baseness. Moods of utter beastliness. . . . Love like April sunshine. April? . . .”

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He dozed and dreamt for a time of spring passing into a high summer sunshine, into a continuing music, of love. He thought of a world like some great playhouse in which players and orchestra and audience all co-operate in a noble production without dissent or conflict. He thought he was the savage of thirty thousand years ago dreaming of the great world that is still perhaps thirty thousand years ahead. His effort to see more of that coming world than indistinct and cloudy pinnacles and to hear more than a vague music, dissolved his dream and left him awake again and wrestling with the problem of Miss Grammont.

§ 2

The shadow of Martin stood over him, inexorable. He had to release Miss Grammont from the adventure into which he had drawn her. This decision stood out stern and inevitable in his mind with no conceivable alternative.

As he looked at the task before him he began to realise its difficulty. He was profoundly in love with her, he was still only learning how deeply, and she was not going to play a merely passive part in this affair. She was perhaps as deeply in love with him. . . .

He could not bring himself to the idea of confessions and disavowals. He could not bear to think of her disillusionment. He felt that he owed it to her not to disillusion her, to spoil things for her in that fashion. "To turn into something mean and ugly after she has believed in me. . . . It would be like

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playing a practical joke upon her. It would be like taking her into my arms and suddenly making a grimace at her. . . . It would scar her with a second humiliation. . . .”

Should he take her on to Bath or Exeter to-morrow and contrive by some surprise of telegrams that he had to go from her suddenly? But a mere sudden parting would not end things between them now unless he went off abruptly without explanation or any arrangement for further communication. At the outset of this escapade there had been a tacit but evident assumption that it was to end when she joined her father at Falmouth. It was with an effect of discovery that Sir Richmond realised that now it could not end in that fashion, that with the whisper of love and the touching of lips something had been started that would go on, that would develop. To break off now and go away without a word would leave a raw and torn end, would leave her perplexed and perhaps even more humiliated, with an aching mystery to distress her. “Why did he go? Was it something I said?—something he found out or imagined?”

Parting had disappeared as a possible solution of this problem. She and he had got into each other's lives to stay: the real problem was the terms upon which they were to stay in each other's lives. Close association had brought them to the point of being, in the completest sense, lovers; that could not be; and the real problem was the transmutation of their relationship to some form compatible with his honour and her happiness. A word, an idea, from some

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recent reading floated into Sir Richmond's head. "Sublimate," he whispered. "We have to sublimate this affair. We have to put this relationship upon a Higher Plane."

His mind stopped short at that.

Presently his voice sounded out of the depths of his heart. "God! How I loathe the Higher Plane! . . .

"God has put me into this Higher-Plane business like some poor little kid who has to wear irons on its legs.

"*I want her. . . . Do you hear, Martin? I want her.*"

As if by a lightning-flash he saw his car with himself and Miss Grammont—Miss Seyffert had probably fallen out—traversing Europe and Asia in headlong flight. To a sunlit beach in the South Seas. . . .

His thoughts presently resumed as though these unmannerly and fantastic interruptions had not occurred.

"We have to carry the whole affair on to a Higher Plane—and keep it there. We two love one another—that has to be admitted now. (I ought never to have touched her. I ought never to have thought of touching her.) But we two are too high, our aims and work and obligations are too high for any ordinary love-making. That sort of thing would embarrass us, would spoil everything.

"Spoil everything," he repeated, rather like a small boy who learns an unpalatable lesson.

For a time Sir Richmond, exhausted by moral effort, lay staring at the darkness.

"It has to be done. I believe I can carry her

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through with it if I can carry myself. She's a finer thing than I am. . . . On the whole I am glad it's only one more day. Belinda will be about. . . . Afterwards we can write to each other. . . . If we can get over the next day it will be all right. Then we can write about fuel and politics—and there won't be her voice and her presence. We shall really *sublimate*. . . . First-class idea,—sublimate! . . . And I will go back to dear old Martin who's all alone there and miserable; I'll be kind to her and play my part and tell her her carbuncle scar rather becomes her. . . . And in a little while I shall be altogether in love with her again. . . .

“Queer what a brute I've always been to Martin.

“Queer that Martin can come in a dream to me and take the upper hand with me. . . .

“Queer that *now*—I love Martin.”

He thought still more profoundly. “By the time the Committee meets again I shall have been tremendously refreshed.”

He repeated: “Put things on the Higher Plane and keep them there. Then go back to Martin. And so to the work. That's it. . . .”

Nothing so pacifies the mind as a clear-cut purpose. Sir Richmond fell asleep during the fourth recapitulation of this programme.

§ 3

When Miss Grammont appeared at breakfast Sir Richmond saw at once that she too had had a restless night. When she came into the little long break-

fast-room of the inn with its brown screens and its neat white tables it seemed to him that at the Miss Grammont of his nocturnal speculations, the beautiful young lady who had to be protected and managed and loved unselfishly, vanished like some exorcised intruder. Instead was this real dear young woman, who had been completely forgotten during the reign of her simulacrum and who now returned completely remembered, familiar, friendly, intimate. She touched his hand for a moment, she met his eyes with the shadow of a smile in her own.

"Oranges!" said Belinda from the table by the window. "Beautiful oranges."

She had been preparing them, poor Transatlantic exile, after the fashion in which grape-fruits are prepared upon liners and in the civilised world of the West. "He's getting us teaspoons," said Belinda, as they sat down.

"This is realler England than ever," she said. "I've been up an hour. I found a little path down to the river-bank. It's the greenest morning world and full of wild flowers. Look at these."

"That's lady's-smock," said Sir Richmond. "It's not really a flower; it's a quotation from Shakespear."

"And there are cowslips!"

"*Cuckoo buds of yellow hie. Do paint the meadows with delight.* All the English flowers come out of Shakespear. I don't know what we did before his time."

The waiter arrived with the teaspoons for the oranges.

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Belinda, having distributed these, resumed her discourse of enthusiasm for England. She asked a score of questions about Gloucester and Chepstow, the Severn and the Romans and the Welsh, and did not wait for the answers. She did not want answers; she talked to keep things going. Her talk masked a certain constraint that came upon her companions after the first morning's greetings were over.

Sir Richmond as he had planned up-stairs produced two Michelin maps. "To-day," he said, "we will run back to Bath—from which it will be easy for you to train to Falmouth. We will go by Monmouth and then turn back through the Forest of Dean, where you will get glimpses of primitive coal-mines still worked by two men and a boy with a windlass and a pail. Perhaps we will go through Cirencester. I don't know. Perhaps it is better to go straight to Bath. In the very heart of Bath you will find yourselves in just the same world you visited at Pompeii. Bath is Pompeii overlaid by Jane Austen's England."

He paused for a moment. "We can wire to your agents from here before we start and we can pick up their reply at Gloucester or Nailsworth or even Bath itself. So that if your father is nearer than we suppose— But I think to-morrow afternoon will be soon enough for Falmouth, anyhow."

He stopped interrogatively.

Miss Grammont's face was white. "That will do very well," she said.

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§ 4

They started, but presently they came to high banks that showed such masses of bluebells, ragged Robin, great stitchwort and the like that Belinda was not to be restrained. She clamoured to stop the car and go up the bank and pick her hands full, and so they drew up by the roadside and Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont sat down near the car while Belinda carried her enthusiastic onslaught on the flowers up the steep bank and presently out of earshot.

The two lovers said unheeded things about the flowers to each other and then fell silent. Then Miss Grammont turned her head and seemed deliberately to measure her companion's distance.

"Well," said Miss Grammont in her soft even voice. "We love one another. Is that so still?"

"I could not love you more."

"It wasn't a dream?"

"No."

"And to-morrow we part?"

He looked her in the eyes. "I have been thinking of that all night," he said at last,

"I too."

"And you think——?"

"That we must part. Just as we arranged it—when was it? Three days or three ages ago? There is nothing else in the world to do except for us to go our ways. . . . I love you. That means for a woman— It means that I want to be with you. But that is impossible. . . . Don't doubt whether I love you because I say—impossible. . . ."

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Sir Richmond, faced with his own nocturnal decision, was now moved to oppose it flatly. "Nothing that one can do is impossible."

She glanced again at Belinda and bent down towards him. "Suppose," she said, "you got back into that car with me; suppose that instead of going on as we have planned, you took me—away. How much of us would go?"

"You would go," said Sir Richmond, "and my heart."

"And this work of yours? And your honour? For the honour of a man in this New Age of yours will be first of all in the work he does for the world. And you will leave your work—to be just a lover. And the work that I might do—because of my father's wealth; all that would vanish too. We should leave all of that, all of our usefulness, all that much of ourselves. But what has made me love you? Just your breadth of vision, just the sense that you mattered. What has made you love me? Just that I have understood the dream of your work. All that we should have to leave behind. We should specialise in our own scandal. We should run away just for one thing. To think, by sharing the oldest, simplest, dearest indulgences in the world, that we had got each other. When really we had lost each other, lost all that mattered. . . ."

Her face was flushed with the earnestness of her conviction. Her eyes were bright with tears. "Don't think I don't love you. It's so hard to say all this. Somehow it seems like going back on something—something supreme. Our instincts have got us. . . ."

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Don't think I'd hold myself from you, dear. I'd give myself to you with both hands. I love you— When a woman loves—I at any rate—she loves altogether. But this thing—I am convinced—cannot be. I must go my own way, the way I have to go. My father is the strangest man, obstinate, more than half a savage. For me—I know it—he has the jealousy of ten husbands. If you take me— If our secret becomes manifest— If you are to take me and keep me, then his life and your life will become wholly this Feud, nothing but this Feud. You have to fight him anyhow—that is why I of all people must keep out of the quarrel. For him it would be an immense excitement, full of the possibility of fierce satisfactions; for you, whether you won me or lost me, it would be utter waste and ruin.”

She paused and then went on: “And for me too, waste and ruin. I shall be a woman fought over. I shall be fought over as dogs fight over a bone. I shall sink back to the level of Helen of Troy. I shall cease to be a free citizen, a responsible free person. Whether you win me or lose me it will be waste and ruin for us both. Your Fuel Commission will go to pieces, all the wide, enduring work you have set me dreaming about will go the same way. We shall just be another romantic story. . . . No!”

Sir Richmond sat still, a little like a sullen child she thought. “I hate all this,” he said slowly. “I didn't think of your father before, and now I think of him it sets me bristling for a fight. It makes all this harder to give up. And yet, do you know, in the night I was thinking, I was coming to conclusions

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very like yours. For quite other reasons. I thought we ought not to— We have to keep friends anyhow and hear of each other?”

“That goes without saying.”

“I thought we ought not to go on to be lovers in any way that would affect you, touch you too closely. . . . I was sorry—I had kissed you.”

“Not I. No. Don’t be sorry for that. I am glad we have fallen in love, more glad than I have been of anything else in my life, and glad we have spoken plainly. . . . Though we have to part. . . . And——”

Her whisper came close to him. “For a whole day yet, all round the clock twice, you and I have one another.”

Miss Seyffert began speaking as soon as she was well within earshot.

“I don’t know the name of a single one of these flowers,” she cried, “except the bluebells. Look at this great handful I’ve gotten! Springtime in Italy doesn’t compare with it, not for a moment.”

§ 5

Because Belinda Seyffert was in the dicky behind them with her alert interest in their emotions all too thinly and obviously veiled, it seemed more convenient to Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont to talk not of themselves but of Man and Woman and of that New Age according to the prophet Martineau, which Sir Richmond had partly described and mainly invented and ascribed to his departed friend. They talked anthropologically, philosophically, specula-

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tively, with an absurd pretence of detachment, they sat side by side in the little car, scarcely glancing at one another, but side by side and touching each other, and all the while they were filled with tenderness and love and hunger for one another.

In the course of a day or so they had touched on nearly every phase in the growth of Man and Woman from that remote and brutish past which has left its traces in human bones mingled with the bones of hyænas and cave bears beneath the stalagmites of Wookey Hole near Wells. In those nearly forgotten days the mind of man and woman had been no more than an evanescent succession of monstrous and infantile imaginations. That brief journey in the west country had lit up phase after phase in the long teaching and discipline of man as he had developed depth of memory and fixity of purpose out of these raw beginnings, through the dreaming childhood of Avebury and Stonehenge and the crude boyhood of ancient wars and massacres. Sir Richmond recalled those phases now, and how, as they had followed one another, man's idea of woman and woman's idea of man had changed with them, until nowadays in the minds of civilised men brute desire and possession and a limitless jealousy had become almost completely overlaid by the desire for fellowship and a free mutual loyalty. "Overlaid," he said. "The older passions are still there like the fires in an engine." He invented a saying for Dr. Martineau that the Man in us to-day was still the old man of Palæolithic times, with his will, his wrath against the universe increased rather than diminished. If to-day he ceases to crack

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his brother's bones and rape and bully his womenkind, it is because he has grown up to a greater game and means to crack this world and feed upon its marrow and wrench their secrets from the stars.

And furthermore it would seem that the prophet Martineau had declared that in this New Age that was presently to dawn for mankind, jealousy was to be disciplined even as we had disciplined lust and anger; instead of ruling our law it was to be ruled by law and custom. No longer were the jealousy of strange peoples, the jealousy of ownership and the jealousy of sex to determine the framework of human life. There was to be one peace and law throughout the world, one economic scheme and a universal freedom for men and women to possess and give themselves.

"And how many generations yet must there be before we reach that Utopia?" Miss Grammont asked.

"I wouldn't put it at a very great distance."

"But think of all the confusions of the world!"

"Confusions merely. The world is just a muddle of states and religions and theories and stupidities. There are great lumps of disorderly strength in it, but as a whole it is a weak world. It goes on by habit. There's no great idea in possession of it and the only possible great idea is this one. The New Age may be nearer than we dare to suppose."

"If I could believe that!"

"There are many more people think as we do than you suppose. Are you and I such very strange and wonderful and exceptional people?"

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"No. I don't think so."

"And yet the New World is already completely established in our hearts. What has been done in our minds can be done in most minds. In a little while the muddled angry mind of Man upon his Planet will grow clear and it will be this idea that will have made it clear. And then life will be very different for every one. That tyranny of disorder which oppresses every life on earth now will be lifted. There will be less and less insecurity, less and less irrational injustice. It will be a better-instructed and a better-behaved world. We shall live at our ease, not perpetually anxious, not resentful and angry. And that will alter all the rules of love. Then we shall think more of the loveliness of other people because it will no longer be necessary to think so much of the dangers and weaknesses and pitifulnesses of other people. We shall not have to think of those who depend upon us for happiness and self-respect. We shall not have to choose between a wasteful fight for a personal end or the surrender of our heart's desire."

"Heart's desire," she whispered. "Am I indeed your heart's desire?"

Sir Richmond sank his head and voice in response.

"You are the best of all things. And I have to let you go."

Sir Richmond suddenly remembered Miss Seyfert and half turned his face towards her. Her forehead was just visible over the hood of the open coupé. She appeared to be intelligently intent upon the scenery. Then he broke out suddenly into a tirade against the world. "But I am bored by this jostling

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unreasonable world. At the bottom of my heart I am bitterly resentful to-day. This is a world of fools and brutes in which we live, a world of idiotic traditions, imbecile limitations, cowardice, habit, greed, and mean cruelty. It is a slum of a world, a congested district, an insanitary jumble of souls and bodies. Every good thing, every sweet desire is thwarted—every one. I have to lead the life of a slum missionary, a sanitary inspector, an underpaid teacher. I am bored. Oh God! how I am bored! I am bored by our laws and customs. I am bored by our rotten empire and its empty monarchy. I am bored by its parades and its flags and its sham enthusiasms. I am bored by London and its life, by its smart life and by its servile life alike. I am bored by theatres and by books and by every sort of thing that people call pleasure. I am bored by the brag of people and the claims of people and the feelings of people. Damn people! I am bored by profiteers and by the snatching they call business enterprise. Damn every business man! I am bored by politics and the universal mismanagement of everything. I am bored by France, by Anglo-Saxondom, by German self-pity, by Bolshevik fanaticism. I am bored by these fools' squabbles that devastate the world. I am bored by Ireland, Orange and Green. Curse the Irish—north and south together! Lord! how I *hate* the Irish from Carson to the last Sinn Feiner! And I am bored by India and by Egypt. I am bored by Poland and by Islam. I am bored by any one who professes to have rights. Damn their rights! Curse their rights! I am bored to death by this year and by last year and by the prospect of next

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year. I am bored—I am horribly bored—by my work. I am bored by every sort of renunciation. I want to live with the woman I love and I want to work within the limits of my capacity. Curse all—Hullo! Damn his eyes!—Steady, ah! The spark! . . . Good! No skid.”

He had come round a corner at five-and-twenty miles an hour and had stopped his spark and pulled up neatly within a yard of the fore wheel of a waggon that was turning in the road so as to block the way completely.

“That almost had me. . . .”

“And now you feel better?” said Miss Grammont.

“Ever so much,” said Sir Richmond and chuckled.

The waggoner cleared the road and the car started up again.

For a minute or so neither spoke.

“You ought to be smacked hard for that outbreak,—my dear,” said Miss Grammont.

“I ought—*my* dear. I have no right to be ill-tempered. We two are among the supremely fortunate ones of our time. We have no excuse for misbehaviour. Got nothing to grumble at. Always I am lucky. *That*—with the waggon—was a very near thing. God spoils us.

“We two,” he went on, after a pause, “are among the most fortunate people alive. We are both rich and easily rich. That gives us freedoms few people have. We have a vision of the whole world in which we live. It’s in a mess—but that is by the way. The mass of mankind never gets enough education to have even a glimpse of the world as a whole. They never

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get a chance to get the hang of it. It is really possible for us to do things that will matter in the world. All our time is our own; all our abilities we are free to use. Most people, most intelligent and educated people, are caught in cages of pecuniary necessity; they are tied to tasks they can't leave, they are driven and compelled and limited by circumstances they can never master. But we, if we have tasks, have tasks of our own choosing. We may not like the world, but anyhow we are free to do our best to alter it. If I were a clerk in Hoxton and you were a city typist, then we *might* swear."

"It was you who swore," smiled Miss Grammont.

"It's the thought of that clerk in Hoxton and that city typist who really keep me at my work. Any smacking ought to come from them. I couldn't do less than I do in the face of their helplessness. Nevertheless a day will come—through what we do and what we refrain from doing—when there will be no bound and limited clerks in Hoxton and no captive typists in the city. And nobody at all to consider."

"According to the prophet Martineau," said Miss Grammont.

"And then you and I must contrive to be born again."

"Heighho!" cried Miss Grammont. "A thousand years ahead! When fathers are civilised. When all these phantom people who intervene on your side—no! I don't want to know anything about them, but I know of them by instinct—when they also don't matter."

"Then you and I can have things out with each

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other—*thoroughly*,” said Sir Richmond, with a surprising ferocity in his voice, charging the little hill before him as though he charged at Time.

§ 6

They had to wait at Nailsworth for a telegram from Mr. Grammont's agents; they lunched there and drove on to Bath in the afternoon. They came into the town through unattractive and unworthy outskirts, and only realised the charm of the place after they had garaged their car at the *Pulteney* Hotel and walked back over the Pulteney Bridge to see the Avon and the Pump Room and the Roman Baths. The *Pulteney* they found hung with pictures and adorned with sculpture to an astonishing extent; some former proprietor must have had a mania for replicas, and the place is eventful with white marble fauns and sylphs and lions and Cæsars and Queen Victorias and packed like an exhibition with memories of Rome, Florence, Milan, Paris, the National Gallery and the Royal Academy, amidst which splendours a competent staff administers modern comforts with an old-fashioned civility. But round and about the *Pulteney* one has still the scenery of Georgian England, the white, faintly classical terraces and houses of the days of Fielding, Smollett, Fanny Burney and Jane Austen, the graceful bridge with the bright little shops full of “presents from Bath”; the Pump Room with its water-drinkers and a fine array of the original Bath chairs.

Down below the Pump Room our travellers ex-

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plored the memories of the days when the world was Latin from York to the Tigris, and the Corinthian capital flourished like a weed from Bath to Baalbek. And they considered a little doubtfully the seventeenth-century statue of Bladud, who is said to have been healed by the Bath waters and to have founded the city in the days when Stonehenge still flourished, eight hundred years before the Romans came.

In the afternoon Miss Seyffert came with Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont and was very enthusiastic about everything, but in the evening after dinner it was clear that her rôle was to remain in the hotel. Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont went out into the moonlit gloaming; they crossed the bridge again and followed the road beside the river towards the old Abbey Church, that Lantern of the West. Away in some sunken gardens ahead of them a band was playing, and a cluster of little lights about the bandstand showed a crowd of people down below dancing on the grass. These little lights, these bobbing black heads and the lilting music, this little inflamed centre of throbbing sounds and ruddy illumination, made the dome of the moonlit world about it seem very vast and cool and silent. Our visitors began to realise that Bath could be very beautiful. They went to the parapet above the river and stood there, leaning over it elbow to elbow and smoking cigarettes. Miss Grammont was moved to declare the Pulteney Bridge, with its noble arch, its effect of height over the swirling river, and the cluster of houses above, more beautiful than the Ponte Vecchio at Florence. Down below was a man in waders with a fishing-rod going to and fro

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along the foaming weir, and a couple of boys paddled a boat against the rush of the water lower down the stream.

"Dear England!" said Miss Grammont, surveying this gracious spectacle. "How full it is of homely and lovely and kindly things!"

"It is the home we come from."

"You belong to it still."

"No more than you do. I belong to a big over-working modern place called London which stretches its tentacles all over the world. I am as much a home-coming tourist as you are. Most of this western country I am seeing for the first time."

She said nothing for a space. "I've not a word to say to-night," she said. "I'm just full of a sort of animal satisfaction in being close to you. . . . And in being with you among lovely things. . . . Somewhere— Before we part to-night— . . ."

"Yes?" he said to her pause, and his face came very near to hers.

"I want you to kiss me."

"Yes," he said awkwardly, glancing over his shoulder, acutely aware of the promenaders passing close to them.

"It's a promise?"

"Yes."

Very timidly and guiltily his hand sought hers beside it and gripped it and pressed it. "My dear!" he whispered, tritest and most unavoidable of expressions. It was not very like Man and Woman loving upon their Planet; it was much more like the shy endearments of the shop-boys and work-girls who made

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the darkling populous about them with their silent interchanges.

"There are a thousand things I want to talk about to you," she said. "After we have parted to-morrow I shall begin to think of them. But now—every rational thing seems dissolved in this moonlight. . . ."

Presently she made an effort to restore the intellectual dignity of their relationship.

"I suppose I ought to be more concerned to-night about the work I have to do in the world and anxious for you to tell me this and that, but indeed I am not concerned at all about it. I seem to have it in outline all perfectly clear. I mean to play a man's part in the world just as my father wants me to do. I mean to win his confidence and work with him—like a partner. Then some day I shall be a power in the world of fuel. And at the same time I must watch and read and think and learn how to be the servant of the world. . . . We two have to live like trusted servants who have been made guardians of a helpless minor. We have to put things in order and keep them in order against the time when Man—Man whom we call in America the Common Man—can take hold of his world——"

"And release his servants," said Sir Richmond.

"All that is perfectly clear in my mind. That is what I am going to live for; that is what I have to do."

She stopped abruptly. "All that is about as interesting to-night—in comparison with the touch of your dear fingers—as next month's railway timetable."

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But later she found a topic that could hold their attention for a time.

"We have never said a word about religion," she said.

Sir Richmond paused for a moment. "I am a godless man," he said. "The stars and space and time overwhelm my imagination. I cannot imagine anything above or beyond them."

She thought that over. "But there are divine things," she said.

"*You* are divine. . . . I'm not talking lovers' nonsense," he hastened to add. "I mean that there is something about human beings—not just the everyday stuff of them, but something that appears intermittently—as though a light shone through something translucent. If I believe in any divinity at all it is a divinity revealed to me by other people— And even by myself in my own heart.

"I'm never surprised at the badness of human beings," said Sir Richmond; "seeing how they have come about and what they are; but I have been surprised time after time by fine things. . . . Often in people I disliked or thought little of. . . . I can understand that I find you full of divine quality, because I am in love with you and all alive to you. Necessarily I keep on discovering loveliness in you. But I have seen divine things—in dear old Martineau, for example. A vain man, fussy, timid—and yet filled with a passion for truth, ready to make great sacrifices and to toil tremendously for that. And in those men I am always cursing, my Committee, it is astonishing at times to discover what streaks of goodness:

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even the really bad men can show. . . . But one can't make use of just any one's divinity. I can see the divinity in Martineau but it leaves me cold. He tired me and bored me. . . . But I live on you. It's only through love that the God can reach over from one human being to another. All real love is a divine thing, a reassurance, a release of courage. It is wonderful enough that we should take food and drink and turn them into imagination, invention, and creative energy; it is still more wonderful that we should take an animal urging and turn it into a light to discover beauty and an impulse towards the utmost achievements of which we are capable. All love is a sacrament and all lovers are priests to each other. You and I——"

Sir Richmond broke off abruptly. "I spent three days trying to tell this to Dr. Martineau. But he wasn't the priest I had to confess to and the words wouldn't come. I can confess it to you readily enough. . . ."

"I cannot tell," said Miss Grammont, "whether this is the last wisdom in life or—moonshine. I cannot tell whether I am thinking or feeling; but the noise of the water going over the weir below is like the stir in my heart. And I am swimming in love and happiness. Am I awake or am I dreaming you, and are we dreaming one another? Hold my hand—hold it hard and tight. I'm trembling with love for you and all the world. . . . If I say more I shall be weeping."

For a long time they stood side by side saying not a word to one another.

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Presently the band down below and the dancing ceased and the little lights were extinguished. The silent moon seemed to grow brighter and larger and the whisper of the waters louder. A crowd of young people flowed out of the gardens and passed by on their way home. Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont strolled through the dispersing crowd and over the Toll-Bridge and went exploring down a little staircase that led from the end of the bridge to the dark river, and then came back to their old position at the parapet looking upon the weir and the Pulteney Bridge. The gardens that had been so gay were already dark and silent as they returned, and the streets echoed emptily to the few people who were still abroad.

"It's the most beautiful bridge in the world," said Miss Grammont, and gave him her hand again.

Some deep-toned clock close by proclaimed the hour eleven.

The silence healed again.

"Well?" said Sir Richmond.

"Well?" said Miss Grammont smiling very faintly.

"I suppose we must go out of all this beauty now, back to the lights of the hotel and the watchful eyes of your dragon."

"She has not been a very exacting dragon so far, has she?"

"She is a miracle of tact."

"She does not really watch. But she is curious—and very sympathetic."

"She is wonderful. . . ."

"That man is still fishing," said Miss Grammont.

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For a time she peered down at the dark figure wading in the foam below as though it was the only thing of interest in the world. Then she turned to Sir Richmond.

"I would trust Belinda with my life," she said. "And anyhow—now—we need not worry about Belinda."

§ 7

At the breakfast-table it was Belinda who was the most nervous of the three, the most moved, the most disposed to throw a sacramental air over their last meal together. Her companions had passed beyond the idea of separation; it was as if they now cherished a secret satisfaction at the high dignity of their parting. Belinda in some way perceived they had become different. They were no longer tremulous lovers; they seemed sure of one another and with a new pride in their bearing. It would have pleased Belinda better, seeing how soon they were to be torn apart, if they had not made quite such excellent breakfasts. She even suspected them of having slept—well. Yet yesterday they had been deeply stirred. They had stayed out late last night, so late that she had not heard them come in. Perhaps then they had passed the climax of their emotions. Sir Richmond, she learned, was to take the party to Exeter, where there would be a train for Falmouth a little after two. If they started from Bath about nine that would give them an ample margin of time in which to deal with a puncture or any such misadventure.

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They crested the Mendips above Shepton Mallet, ran through Ilchester and Ilminster into the lovely hill country about Up-Ottery and so to Honiton and the broad level road to Exeter. Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont were in a state of happy gravity; they sat contentedly side by side, talking very little. They had already made their arrangements for writing to one another. There was to be no stream of love-letters or protestations. That might prove a mutual torment. Their love was to be implicit. They were to write at intervals about political matters and their common interests, and to keep each other informed of their movements about the world.

"We shall be working together," she said, speaking suddenly out of a train of thought she had been following, "we shall be closer together than many a couple who have never spent a day apart for twenty years."

Then presently she said: "In the New Age all lovers will have to be accustomed to meeting and parting. We women will not be tied very much by domestic needs. Unless we see fit to have children. We shall be going about our business like men; we shall have world-wide businesses—many of us—just as men will. . . .

"It will be a world full of lovers' meetings. Some day—somewhere—we two will certainly meet again."

"Even you have to force circumstances a little," said Sir Richmond.

"We shall meet," she said, "without doing that."

"But where?" he asked unanswered. . . .

"Meetings and partings," she said. "Women will be used to seeing their lovers go away. Even to seeing

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them go away to other women who have borne them children and who have a closer claim on them."

"No one—" began Sir Richmond, startled.

"But I don't mind very much. It's how things are. If I were a perfectly civilised woman I shouldn't mind at all. If men and women are not to be tied to each other there must needs be such things as this."

"But you," said Sir Richmond. "I at any rate am not like that. I cannot bear the thought that *you*——"

"You need not bear it, my dear. I was just trying to imagine this world that is to be. Women I think are different from men—in their jealousy. Men are jealous of the other man; women are jealous for their man—and careless about the other woman. What I love in you I am sure about. My mind was empty when it came to you and now it is full to overflowing. I shall feel you moving about in the same world with me. I'm not likely to think of any one else for a very long time. . . . Later on, who knows? I may marry. I make no vows. But I think until I know certainly that you do not want me any more it will be impossible for me to marry or to have a lover. I don't know, but that is how I believe it will be with me. And my mind feels beautifully clear now and settled. I've got your idea and made it my own, your idea that we matter scarcely at all, but that the work we do matters supremely. I'll find my rope and tug it, never fear. Half-way round the world perhaps some day you will feel me tugging."

"I shall feel you're there," he said, "whether you tug or not. . . ."

FULL MOON

"Three miles left to Exeter," he reported presently. She glanced back at Belinda.

"It is good that we have loved, my dear," she whispered. "Say it is good."

"The best thing in all my life," he said, and lowered his head and voice to say: "My dearest dear."

"Heart's desire—still?"

"Heart's delight. . . . Priestess of life. . . . Divinity."

She smiled and nodded and suddenly Belinda, up above their lowered heads, accidentally and irrelevantly, no doubt, coughed.

At Exeter station there was not very much time to spare after all. Hardly had Sir Richmond secured a luncheon basket for the two travellers before the train came into the station. He parted from Miss Grammont with a hand-clasp. Belinda was flushed and distressed at the last but her friend was quiet and still. "Au revoir," said Belinda without conviction when Sir Richmond shook her hand.

§ 8

Sir Richmond stood quite still on the platform as the train ran out of the station. He did not move until it had disappeared round the bend. Then he turned, lost in a brown study, and walked very slowly towards the station exit.

"The most wonderful thing in my life," he thought. "And already—it is unreal."

"She will go on to her father—whom she knows ten

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thousand times more thoroughly than she knows me; she will go on to Paris, she will pick up all the threads of her old story, be reminded of endless things in her life, but never except in the most casual way of these days: they will be cut off from everything else that will serve to keep them real; and as for me—this connects with nothing else in my life at all. . . . It is as disconnected as a dream. . . . Already it is hardly more substantial than a dream. . . .

"We shall write letters. Do letters breathe faster or slower as you read them?"

"We may meet."

"Where are we likely to meet again? . . . I never realised before how improbable it is that we shall meet again. And if we meet? . . .

"Never in all our lives shall we be really *together* again. It's over— With a completeness. . . .

"Like death."

He came opposite the book-stalls and stopped short and stared with unseeing eyes at the display of popular literature. He was wondering now whether after all he ought to have let her go. He experienced something of the blank amazement of a child who has burst its toy balloon. His golden globe of satisfaction had gone in an instant. An irrational sense of loss was flooding every other feeling about V. V. If she had loved him truly and altogether could she have left him like this? Neither of them surely had intended so complete a separation. He wanted to go back and recall that train.

A few seconds more, he realised, and he would give way to anger. Whatever happened that must not

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happen. He pulled himself together. What was it he had to do now? He had not to be angry, he had not even to be sorry. They had done the right thing. Outside the station his car was waiting.

He went outside the station and stared at his car. He had to go somewhere. Of course! down into Cornwall to Martin's cottage. He had to go down to her and be kind and comforting about that carbuncle. To be kind? . . . If this thwarted feeling broke out into anger he might be tempted to take it out of Martin. That at any rate he must not do. He had always for some inexplicable cause treated Martin badly. Nagged her and blamed her and threatened her. That must stop now. No shadow of this affair must lie on Martin. . . . And Martin must never have a suspicion of any of this. . . .

The image of Martin became very vivid in his mind. He thought of her as he had seen her many times, with the tears close, fighting with her back to the wall, with all her wit and vigour gone, because she loved him more steadfastly than he did her. Whatever happened he must not take it out of Martin. It was astonishing how real she had become now—as V. V. became a dream. Yes, Martin was astonishingly real. And if only he could go now and talk to Martin—and face all the facts of life with her, even as he had done with that phantom Martin in his dream. . . .

But things were not like that.

He looked to see if his car was short of water or petrol; both needed replenishing, and so he would have to go up the hill into Exeter town again. He got

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into his car and sat with his fingers on the electric starter.

Martin! Old Friend! Eight days were still left before the Committee met again, eight days for golden kindness. He would distress Martin by no clumsy confession. He would just make her happy as she loved to be made happy. . . . Nevertheless. Nevertheless. . . .

Was it Martin who failed him or he who failed Martin?

Incessant and insoluble dispute. Well, the thing now was to go to Martin. . . . And then the work!

He laughed suddenly.

"I'll take it out of the damned Commission. I'll make old Rumford Brown sit up."

He was astonished to find himself thinking of the affairs of the Commission with a lively interest and no trace of fatigue. He had had his change; he had taken his rest; he was equal to his task again already. He started his engine and steered his way past a van and a waiting cab.

"Fuel," he said.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

THE LAST DAYS OF SIR RICHMOND HARDY

§ 1

THE Majority and Minority Reports of the Fuel Commission were received on their first publication with much heat and disputation, but there is already a fairly general agreement that they are great and significant documents, broadly conceived and historically important. They lift the questions of fuel supply and distribution high above the level of parochial jealousies and above the petty and destructive profiteering of private owners and traders, to a view of the general human welfare. They form an important link in a series of private and public documents that are slowly opening out a prospect of new economic methods, methods conceived in the generous spirit of scientific work, that may yet arrest the drift of our western civilisation towards financial and commercial squalor and the social collapse that must ensue inevitably on that. In view of the composition of the Committee, the Majority Report is in itself an amazing triumph of Sir Richmond's views; it is astonishing that he was able to drive his opponents so far and then leave them there securely advanced while he carried on the adherents he had altogether won, including of course the labour representatives, to the further altitudes of the Minority Report.

After the summer recess the Majority Report was

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discussed and adopted. Sir Richmond had shown signs of flagging energy in June, but he had come back in September in a state of exceptional vigour; for a time he completely dominated the Committee by the passionate force of his convictions and the illuminating scorn he brought to bear on the various subterfuges and weakening amendments by which the meaner interests sought to save themselves in whole or in part from the common duty of sacrifice. But towards the end he fell ill. He had worked to the pitch of exhaustion. He neglected a cold that settled on his chest. He began to cough persistently and betray an increasingly irritable temper. In the last fights in the Committee his face was bright with fever and he spoke in a voiceless whisper, often a vast angry whisper. His place at table was marked with scattered lozenges and scraps of paper torn to the minutest shreds. Such good manners as had hitherto mitigated his behaviour on the Committee departed from him. He carried his last points, gesticulating and coughing and wheezing rather than speaking. But he had so hammered his ideas into the Committee that they took the effect of what he was trying to say.

He died of pneumonia at his own house three days after the passing of the Majority Report. The Minority Report, his own especial creation, he never signed. It was completed by Wast and Carmichael. . . .

After their parting at Salisbury station Dr. Martineau heard very little of Sir Richmond for a time except through the newspapers, which contained frequent allusions to the Committee. Some one told

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him that Sir Richmond had been staying at Ruan in Cornwall where Martin Leeds had a cottage, and some one else had met him at Bath on his way, he said, in his car from Cornwall to a conference with Sir Peter Davies in Glamorganshire.

But in the interim Dr. Martineau had the pleasure of meeting Lady Hardy at a luncheon-party. He was seated next to her and he found her a very pleasing and sympathetic person indeed. She talked to him freely and simply of her husband and of the journey the two men had taken together. Either she knew nothing of the circumstances of their parting or if she did she did not betray her knowledge. "That holiday did him a world of good," she said. "He came back to his work like a giant. I feel very grateful to you."

Dr. Martineau said it was a pleasure to have helped Sir Richmond's work in any way. He believed in him thoroughly. Sir Richmond was inspired by great modern creative ideas.

"Forgive me if I keep you talking about him," said Lady Hardy. "I wish I could feel as sure that I had been of use to him."

Dr. Martineau insisted. "I know very well that you are."

"I do what I can to help him carry his enormous burthen of toil," she said. "I try to smooth his path. But he is a strange silent creature at times."

Her eyes scrutinised the doctor's face.

It was not the doctor's business to supplement Sir Richmond's silences. Yet he wished to meet the requirements of this lady if he could. "He is one of

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those men," he said, "who are driven by forces they do not fully understand. A man of genius."

"Yes," she said in an undertone of intimacy. "Genius. . . . A great irresponsible genius. . . . Difficult to help. . . . I wish I could do more for him."

A very sweet and charming lady. It was with great regret that the doctor found the time had come to turn to his left-hand neighbour.

§ 2

It was with some surprise that Dr. Martineau received a fresh appeal for aid from Sir Richmond. It was late in October and Sir Richmond was already seriously ill. But he was still going about his business as though he was perfectly well. He had not mistaken his man. Dr. Martineau received him as though there had never been a shadow of offence between them.

He came straight to the point. "Martineau," he said, "I must have those drugs now I asked you for when first I came to you. I must be bolstered up. I can't last out unless I am. I'm at the end of my energy. I come to you because you will understand. The Commission can't go on now for more than another three weeks. Whatever happens afterwards I must keep going until then."

The doctor did understand. He made no vain objections. He did what he could to patch up his friend for his last struggles with the opposition in the Committee. "Pro forma," he said, stethoscope in

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hand, "I must order you to bed. You won't go. But I order you. You must know that what you are doing is risking your life. Your lungs are congested, the bronchial tubes already. That may spread at any time. If this open weather lasts you may go about and still pull through. But at any time this may pass into pneumonia. And there's not much in you just now to stand up against pneumonia. . . ."

"I'll take all reasonable care."

"Is your wife at home?"

"She is in Wales with her people. But the household is well trained. I can manage."

"Go in a closed car from door to door. Wrap up like a mummy. I wish the Committee-room wasn't down those abominable House of Commons corridors. . . ."

They parted with an affectionate hand-shake.

§ 3

Death approved of Sir Richmond's determination to see the Committee through. Our universal creditor gave this particular debtor grace to the very last meeting. Then he brushed a gust of chilly rain across the face of Sir Richmond as he stood waiting for his car outside the strangers' entrance to the House. For a couple of days Sir Richmond felt almost intolerably tired, but scarcely noted the changed timbre of the wheezy notes in his throat. He rose later each day and with ebbing vigour, jotted down notes and corrections upon the proofs of the Minority Report. He found it increasingly difficult to make decisions;

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he would correct and alter back and then repeat the correction, perhaps half a dozen times. On the evening of the second day his lungs became painful and his breathing difficult. His head ached and a sense of some great impending evil came upon him. His skin was suddenly a detestable garment to wear. He took his temperature with a clinical thermometer he kept by him and found it was a hundred and one. He telephoned hastily for Dr. Martineau and without waiting for his arrival, took a hot bath and got into bed. He was already thoroughly ill when the doctor arrived.

"Forgive my sending for you," he said. "Not your line. I know. . . . My wife's G. P.—an exasperating sort of ass. Can't stand him. No one else."

He was lying on a narrow little bed with a hard pillow that the doctor replaced by one from Lady Hardy's room. He had twisted the bedclothes into a hopeless muddle, the sheet was on the floor.

Sir Richmond's bedroom was a large apartment in which sleep seemed to have been an admitted necessity rather than a principal purpose. On one hand it opened into a businesslike dressing and bath room, on the other into the day-study. It bore witness to the nocturnal habits of a man who had long lived a life of irregular impulses to activity and dislocated hours and habits. There was a desk and reading-lamp for night-work near the fireplace, an electric kettle for making tea at night, a silver biscuit tin; all the apparatus for the lonely intent industry of the small hours. There was a bookcase of bluebooks, books of reference and suchlike material, and some files. Over

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the mantelpiece was an enlarged photograph of Lady Hardy and a plain office calendar. The desk was littered with the galley proofs of the Minority Report upon which Sir Richmond had been working up to the moment of his hasty retreat to bed. And lying among the proofs, as though it had been taken out and looked at quite recently, was the photograph of a girl. For a moment Dr. Martineau's mind hung in doubt and then he knew it for the young American of Stonehenge. How that affair had ended he did not know. And now it was not his business to know.

These various observations printed themselves on Dr. Martineau's mind after his first cursory examination of his patient and while he cast about for anything that would give this large industrious apartment a little more of the restfulness and comfort of a sick-room. "I must get in a night-nurse at once," he said. "We must find a small table somewhere to put near the bed.

"I am afraid you are very ill," he said, returning to the bedside. "This is not, as you say, my sort of work. Will you let me call in another man, a man we can trust thoroughly, to consult?"

"I'm in your hands," said Sir Richmond. "I want to pull through."

"He will know better where to get the right sort of nurse for the case—and everything. . . ."

The second doctor presently came, with the right sort of nurse hard on his heels. Sir Richmond submitted almost silently to his expert handling and was sounded and looked to and listened at.

"H'm," said the second doctor, and then encourag-

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ingly to Sir Richmond: "We've got to take care of you.

"There's a lot about this I don't like," said the second doctor and drew Dr. Martineau by the arm towards the study. For a moment or so Sir Richmond listened to the low murmur of their voices, but he did not feel very deeply interested in what they were saying. He began to think what a decent chap Dr. Martineau was, how helpful and fine and forgiving his professional training had made him, how completely he had ignored the smothered incivilities of their parting at Salisbury. All men ought to have some such training. Not a bad idea to put every boy and girl through a year or so of hospital service. . . . Sir Richmond must have dozed, for his next perception was of Dr. Martineau standing over him and saying, "I am afraid, my dear Hardy, that you are very ill indeed. Much more so than I thought you were at first."

Sir Richmond's raised eyebrows conveyed that he accepted this fact.

"I think Lady Hardy ought to be sent for."

Sir Richmond shook his head with unexpected vigour.

"Don't want her about," he said, and after a pause, "Don't want anybody about."

"But if anything happens——?"

"Send then."

An expression of obstinate calm overspread Sir Richmond's face. He seemed to regard the matter as settled. He closed his eyes.

For a time Dr. Martineau desisted. He went to the window and turned to look again at the impassive

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figure on the bed. Did Sir Richmond fully understand? He made a step towards his patient and hesitated. Then he brought a chair and sat down at the bedside.

Sir Richmond opened his eyes and regarded him with a slight frown.

"A case of pneumonia," said the doctor, "after great exertion and fatigue, may take very rapid and unexpected turns."

Sir Richmond, cheek on pillow, seemed to assent.

"I think if you want to be sure that Lady Hardy sees you again— . . . If you don't want to take risks about that— . . . One never knows in these cases. Probably there is a night train."

Sir Richmond manifested no surprise at the warning. But he stuck to his point. His voice was faint but firm. "Couldn't make up anything to say to her. Anything she'd like."

Dr. Martineau rested on that for a little while. Then he said: "If there is any one else?"

"Not possible," said Sir Richmond, with his eyes on the ceiling.

"But to see?"

Sir Richmond turned his head to Dr. Martineau. His face puckered like a peevish child's. "They'd want things said to them. . . . Things to remember. . . . I *can't*. I'm tired out."

"Don't trouble," whispered Dr. Martineau, suddenly remorseful.

But Sir Richmond also was remorseful. "Give them my love," he said. "Best love. . . . Old Martin. Love. . . ."

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Dr. Martineau was turning away when Sir Richmond spoke again in a whisper. "Best love. . . . Poor at the best. . . ."

He dozed for a time. Then he made a great effort. "I can't see them, Martineau, until I've something to say. It's like that. Perhaps I shall think of some kind things to say—after a sleep. But if they came now. . . . I'd say something wrong. Be cross perhaps. Hurt some one. I've hurt so many. . . . People exaggerate. . . . People exaggerate—importance these occasions."

"Yes, yes," whispered Dr. Martineau. "I quite understand."

§ 4

For a time Sir Richmond dozed. Then he stirred and muttered. "Second rate. . . . Poor at the best. . . . Love. . . . Work. All. . . ."

"It has been splendid work," said Dr. Martineau, and was not sure that Sir Richmond heard.

"Those last few days . . . lost my grip. . . . Always lose my damned grip.

"Ragged them. . . . Put their backs up. . . . Silly. . . .

"Never. . . . Never done anything—*well*. . . .

"It's done. Done. Well or ill. . . .

"Done."

His voice sank to the faintest whisper. "Done for ever and ever . . . and ever . . . and ever."

Again he seemed to doze.

Dr. Martineau stood up softly. Something beyond reason told him that this was certainly a dying man.

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He was reluctant to go and he had an absurd desire that some one, some one for whom Sir Richmond cared, should come and say good-bye to him, and for Sir Richmond to say good-bye to some one. He hated this lonely launching from the shores of life of one who had sought intimacy so persistently and vainly. It was extraordinary—he saw it now for the first time—he loved this man. If it had been in his power, he would at that moment have anointed him with kindness.

The doctor found himself standing in front of the untidy writing-desk, littered like a recent battle-field. The photograph of the American girl drew his eyes. What had happened? Was there not perhaps some word for her? He turned about as if to inquire of the dying man and found Sir Richmond's eyes open and regarding him. In them he saw an expression he had seen there once or twice before, a faint but excessively irritating gleam of amusement.

"Oh!—*Well!*" said Dr. Martineau and turned away. He went to the window and stared out as his habit was.

Sir Richmond continued to smile dimly at the doctor's back until his eyes closed again.

It was their last exchange. Sir Richmond died that night in the small hours, so quietly that for some time the night-nurse did not observe what had happened. She was indeed roused to that realisation by the ringing of the telephone bell in the adjacent study.

§ 5

For a long time that night Dr. Martineau had lain awake unable to sleep. He was haunted by the figure of Sir Richmond lying on his uncomfortable little bed in his big bedroom and by the curious effect of loneliness produced by the nocturnal desk and by the evident dread felt by Sir Richmond of any death-bed partings. He realised how much this man, who had once sought so feverishly for intimacies, had shrunk back upon himself, how solitary his motives had become, how rarely he had taken counsel with any one in his later years. His mind now dwelt apart. Even if people came about him he would still be facing death alone.

And so it seemed he meant to slip out of life, as a man might slip out of a crowded assembly, unobserved. Even now he might be going. The doctor recalled how he and Sir Richmond had talked of the rage of life in a young baby, how we drove into life in a sort of fury, how that rage impelled us to do this and that, how we fought and struggled until the rage spent itself and was gone. That eddy of rage that was Sir Richmond was now perhaps very near its end. Presently it would fade and cease, and the stream that had made it and borne it would know it no more.

Dr. Martineau's thoughts relaxed and passed into the picture land of dreams. He saw the figure of Sir Richmond, going as it were away from him along a narrow path, a path that followed the crest of a ridge, between great darknesses, enormous cloudy darknesses, above him and below. He was going along

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this path without looking back, without a thought for those he left behind, without a single word to cheer him on his way, walking as Dr. Martineau had sometimes watched him walking, without haste or avidity, walking as a man might along some great picture-gallery with which he was perhaps even overfamiliar. His hands would be in his pockets, his indifferent eyes upon the clouds about him. And as he strolled along that path, the darkness closed in upon him. His figure became dim and dimmer.

Whither did that figure go? Did that enveloping darkness hide the beginnings of some strange long journey or would it just dissolve that figure into itself?

Was that indeed the end?

Dr. Martineau was one of that large class of people who can neither imagine nor disbelieve in immortality. Dimmer and dimmer grew the figure but still it remained visible. As one can continue to see a star at dawn until one turns away. Or one blinks or nods and it is gone.

Vanished now are the beliefs that held our race for countless generations. Where now was that Path of the Dead, mapped so clearly, faced with such certainty, in which the heliolithic peoples believed from Avebury to Polynesia? Not always have we had to go alone and unprepared into uncharted darknesses. For a time the dream artist used a palette of the doctor's vague memories of things Egyptian, he painted a new roll of the Book of the Dead, at a copy of which the doctor had been looking a day or so before. Sir Richmond became a brown naked figure, crossing a bridge

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of danger, passing between terrific monsters, ferrying a dark and dreadful stream. He came to the scales of judgment before the very throne of Osiris and stood waiting while dog-headed Anubis weighed his conscience and that evil monster, the Devourer of the Dead, crouched ready if the judgment went against him. The doctor's attention concentrated upon the scales. A memory of Swedenborg's "Heaven and Hell" mingled with the Egyptian fantasy. Now at last it was possible to know something real about this man's soul, now at last one could look into the Secret Places of his Heart. Anubis and Thoth, the god with the ibis head, were reading the heart as if it were a book, reading aloud from it to the supreme judge.

Suddenly the doctor found himself in his own dreams. His anxiety to plead for his friend had brought him in. He too had become a little painted figure and he was bearing a book in his hand. He wanted to show that the laws of the new world could not be the same as those of the old, and the book he was bringing as evidence was his own "Psychology of a New Age."

The clear thought of that book broke up his dream by releasing a train of waking troubles. . . . You have been six months on Chapter Ten; will it ever be ready for Osiris? . . . Will it ever be ready for print? . . .

Dream and waking thoughts were mingled like sky and cloud upon a windy day in April. Suddenly he saw again that lonely figure on the narrow way with darkneses above and darkneses below and darkneses on every hand. But this time it was not Sir

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Richmond. . . . Who was it? Surely it was Everyman. Everyman had to travel at last along that self-same road, leaving love, leaving every task and every desire. But was it Everyman? . . . A great fear and horror came upon the doctor. That little figure was himself! And the book which was his particular task in life was still undone. He himself stood in his turn upon that lonely path with the engulfing darknesses about him. . . .

He seemed to wrench himself awake.

He lay very still for some moments and then he sat up in bed. An overwhelming conviction had arisen in his mind that Sir Richmond was dead. He felt he must know for certain. He switched on his electric light, mutely interrogated his round face reflected in the looking-glass, got out of bed, shuffled on his slippers and went along the passage to the telephone. He hesitated for some seconds and then lifted the receiver. It was his call which aroused the nurse to the fact of Sir Richmond's death.

§ 6

Lady Hardy arrived home in response to Dr. Martineau's telegram late on the following evening. He was with her next morning, comforting and sympathetic. Her big blue eyes, bright with tears, met his very wistfully; her little body seemed very small and pathetic in its simple black dress. And yet there was a sort of bravery about her. When he came into the drawing-room she was in one of the window recesses talking to a serious-looking woman of the

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dressmaker type. She left her business at once to come to him. "Why did I not know in time?" she cried.

"No one, dear lady, had any idea until late last night," he said, taking both her hands in his for a long friendly sympathetic pressure.

"I might have known that if it had been possible you would have told me," she said.

"You know," she added, "I don't believe it yet. I don't realise it. I go about these formalities——"

"I think I can understand that."

"He was always, you know, not quite here. . . . It is as if he were a little more not quite here. . . . I can't believe it is over. . . ."

She asked a number of questions and took the doctor's advice upon various details of the arrangements. "My daughter Helen comes home to-morrow afternoon," she explained. "She is in Paris. But our son is far, far away in the Punjab. I have sent him a telegram. . . . It is so kind of you to come in to me."

Dr. Martineau went more than half-way to meet Lady Hardy's disposition to treat him as a friend of the family. He had conceived a curious, half-maternal affection for Sir Richmond that had survived even the trying incident of the Salisbury parting and revived very rapidly during the last few weeks. This affection extended itself now to Lady Hardy. Hers was a type that had always appealed to him. He could understand so well the perplexed loyalty with which she was now setting herself to gather together some preservative and reassuring evidences of this man who had always been, as she put it, "never quite

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here." It was as if she felt that now it was at last possible to make a definite reality of him. He could be fixed. And as he was fixed he would stay. Never more would he be able to come in and with an almost expressionless glance wither the interpretation she had imposed upon him. She was finding much comfort in this task of reconstruction. She had gathered together in the drawing-room every presentable portrait she had been able to find of him. He had never, she said, sat to a painter, but there was an early pencil sketch done within a couple of years of their marriage; there was a number of photographs, several of which—she wanted the doctor's advice upon this point—she thought might be enlarged; there was a statuette done by some woman artist who had once beguiled him into a sitting. There was also a painting she had had worked up from a photograph and some notes. She flitted among these memorials, going from one to the other, undecided which to make the standard portrait. "That painting, I think, is most like," she said: "as he was before the war. But the war and the Commission changed him,—worried him and aged him. . . . I grudged him to that Commission. He let it worry him frightfully."

"It meant very much to him," said Dr. Martineau.

"It meant too much to him. But of course his ideas were splendid. You know it is one of my hopes to get some sort of book done, explaining his ideas. He would never write. He despised it—unreasonably. A real thing done, he said, was better than a thousand books. Nobody reads books, he said, but women, parsons, and idle people. But there must be books. And

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I want one. Something a little more real than the ordinary official biography. . . . I have thought of young Leighton, the secretary of the Commission. He seems thoroughly intelligent and sympathetic and really anxious to reconcile Richmond's views with those of the big business men on the Committee. He might do. . . . Or perhaps I might be able to persuade two or three people to write down their impressions of him. A sort of memorial volume. . . . But he was shy of friends. There was no man he talked to very intimately about his ideas unless it was to you . . . I wish I had the writer's gift, Doctor."

§ 7

It was on the second afternoon that Lady Hardy summoned Dr. Martineau by telephone. "Something rather disagreeable," she said. "If you could spare the time. If you could come round.

"It is frightfully distressing," she said when he got round to her, and for a time she could tell him nothing more. She was having tea and she gave him some. She fussed about with cream and cakes and biscuits. He noted a crumpled letter thrust under the edge of the silver tray.

"He talked, I know, very intimately with you," she said, coming to it at last. "He probably went into things with you that he never talked about with any one else. Usually he was very reserved. Even with me there were things about which he said nothing."

"We did," said Dr. Martineau with discretion, "deal a little with his private life."

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"There was some one——"

Dr. Martineau nodded and then, not to be too portentous, took and bit a biscuit.

"Did he by any chance ever mention some one called Martin Leeds?"

Dr. Martineau seemed to reflect. Then realising that this was a mistake, he said: "He told me the essential facts."

The poor lady breathed a sigh of relief. "I'm glad," she said simply. She repeated, "Yes, I'm glad. It makes things easier now."

Dr. Martineau looked his inquiry.

"She wants to come and see him."

"Here?"

"Here! And Helen here! And the servants noticing everything! I've never met her. Never set eyes on her. For all I know she may want to make a scene." There was infinite dismay in her voice.

Dr. Martineau was grave. "You would rather not receive her?"

"I don't want to refuse her. I don't want even to seem heartless. I understand, of course, she has a sort of claim." She sobbed her reluctant admission. "I know it. I know. . . . There was much between them."

Dr. Martineau pressed the limp hand upon the little tea-table. "I understand, dear lady," he said. "I understand. Now . . . suppose *I* were to write to her and arrange— I do not see that you need be put to the pain of meeting her. Suppose I were to meet her here myself?"

"If you *could*!"

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The doctor was quite prepared to save the lady any further distresses, no matter at what trouble to himself. "You are so good to me," she said, letting the tears have their way with her.

"I am silly to cry," she said, dabbing her eyes.

"We will get it over to-morrow," he reassured her. "You need not think of it again."

He took over Martin's brief note to Lady Hardy and set to work by telegram to arrange for her visit. She was in London at her Chelsea flat and easily accessible. She was to come to the house at mid-day on the morrow, and to ask not for Lady Hardy but for him. He would stay by her while she was in the house, and it would be quite easy for Lady Hardy to keep herself and her daughter out of the way. They could, for example, go out quietly to the dressmaker's in the closed car, for many little things about the mourning still remained to be seen to.

§ 8

Miss Martin Leeds arrived punctually, but the doctor was well ahead of his time and ready to receive her. She was ushered into the drawing-room where he awaited her. As she came forward the doctor first perceived that she had a very sad and handsome face, the face of a sensitive youth rather than the face of a woman. She had fine grey eyes under very fine brows; they were eyes that at other times might have laughed very agreeably, but which were now full of an unrestrained sadness. Her brown hair was untidy

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and parted at the side like a man's. Then he noted that she was dressed as if she was that rare and, to him, very offensive thing, a woman careless of her beauty. She was short in proportion to her broad figure and her broad forehead.

"You are Dr. Martineau?" she said. "He talked of you." As she spoke her glance went from him to the pictures that stood about the room. She walked up to the painting and stood in front of it with her distressed gaze wandering about her. "Horrible!" she said. "Absolutely horrible! . . . Did *she* do this?"

Her question disconcerted the doctor very much. "You mean Lady Hardy?" he asked. "She doesn't paint."

"No, no. I mean, did she get all these things together?"

"Naturally," said Dr. Martineau.

"None of them are a bit like him. They are like blows aimed at his memory. Not one has his life in it. How could she do it? Look at that idiot statuette! . . . He was extraordinarily difficult to get. I have burned every photograph I had of him. For fear that this would happen; that he would go stiff and formal—just as you have got him here. I have been trying to sketch him almost all the time since he died. But I can't get him back. He's gone."

She turned to the doctor again. She spoke to him, not as if she expected him to understand her, but because she had to say these things which burthened her mind to some one. "I have done hundreds of sketches. My room is littered with them. When you turn them

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over he seems to be lurking among them. But not one of them is like him."

She was trying to express something beyond her power. "It is as if some one had suddenly turned out the light."

She followed the doctor up-stairs. "This was his study," the doctor explained.

"I know it. I came here once," she said.

They entered the big bedroom in which the cofined body lay. Dr. Martineau, struck by a sudden memory, glanced nervously at the desk, but some one had made it quite tidy and the portrait of Miss Grammont had disappeared. Miss Leeds walked straight across to the coffin and stood looking down on the waxen inexpressive dignity of the dead. Sir Richmond's brows and nose had become sharper and more clear-cut than they had ever been in life and his lips had set into a faint inane smile. She stood quite still for a long time. At length she sighed deeply.

She spoke, a little as though she thought aloud, a little as though she talked at that silent presence in the coffin. "I think he loved," she said. "Sometimes I think he loved me. But it is hard to tell. He was kind. He could be intensely kind and yet he didn't seem to care for you. He could be intensely selfish and yet he certainly did not care for himself. . . . Anyhow, I loved *him*. . . . There is nothing left in me now to love any one else—for ever. . . ."

She put her hands behind her back and looked at the dead man with her head a little on one side. "Too kind," she said very softly.

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"There was a sort of dishonesty in his kindness. He would not let you have the bitter truth. He would not say he did not love you. . . .

"He was too kind to life ever to call it the foolish thing it is. He took it seriously because it takes itself seriously. He worked for it and killed himself with work for it. . . ."

She turned to Dr. Martineau and her face was streaming with tears. "And life, you know, isn't to be taken seriously. It is a joke—a bad joke—made by some cruel little god who has caught a neglected planet. . . . Like torturing a stray cat. . . . But he took it seriously and he gave up his life for it.

"There was much happiness he might have had. He was very capable of happiness. But he never seemed happy. This work of his came before it. He overworked and fretted our happiness away. He sacrificed his happiness and mine."

She held out her hands towards the doctor. "What am I to do now with the rest of my life? Who is there to laugh with me now and jest?"

"I don't complain of him. I don't blame him. He did his best—to be kind.

"But all my days now I shall mourn for him and long for him. . . ."

She turned back to the coffin. Suddenly she lost every vestige of self-control. She sank down on her knees beside the trestle. "Why have you left me?" she cried.

"Oh! Speak to me, my darling! Speak to me, *I tell you!* Speak to me!"

It was a storm of passion, monstrously childish and

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dreadful. She beat her hands upon the coffin. She wept loudly and fiercely as a child does. . . .

Dr. Martineau drifted feebly to the window.

He wished he had locked the door. The servants might hear and wonder what it was all about. Always he had feared love for the cruel thing it was, but now it seemed to him for the first time that he realised its monstrous cruelty.

THE END

